

• REOILM5 •





REALM 5 is dedicated to Darrel, Nyle, Monte, Bill, Vaughn, Gary, John, Ron, Jack, Mike, Gil, Tim, Chris, Roy, Gordy, Jeff, Tom, Doug, Stuart, Jan, Dave, Alan, and Berni, for their help and inspiration.

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HEY THERE,
I IS A LIZARD ON
SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT
FROM CAVALIER
MAGAZINE TO
INSPECT DIS ISSUE
OF ROMERO'S
REALM.



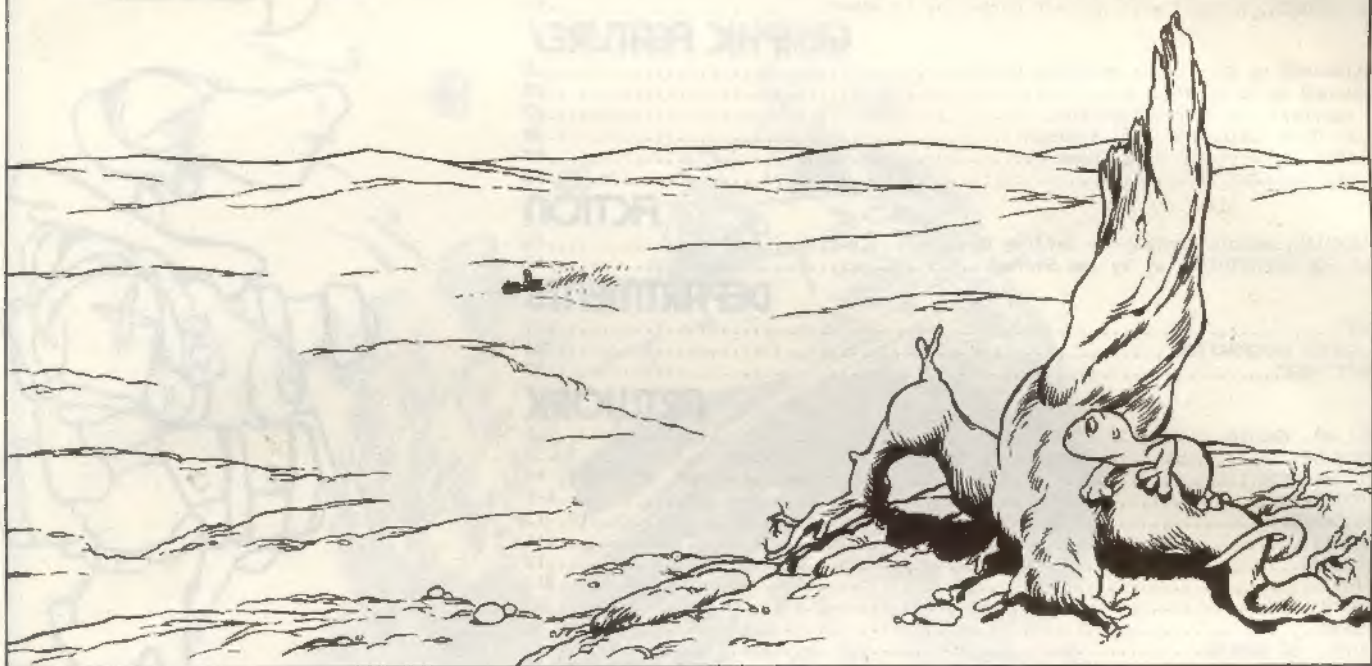
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...AND THE DAYS GREW EVEN HOTTER AS AUGUST
SLIPPED INTO SIGHT. THE SCORTCHED KANSAS
COUNTRYSIDE COULD DO LITTLE TO PROTECT
ITSELF FROM THE BURNING HEAT.



YET ON THIS
DAY, A SOLOMN
FIGURE BRAVES
THE HEAT TO
WEAVE HIS WAY
OVER THE
YELLOW SAND...



...TO THE DYING TOWN OF TRIANGLE CROSS.



GARY BROWN & DOUG POTTER
present

the RAINMAKER

BASED ON THE SONG BY
HARRY NILSSON & BILL MARTIN



NINETY DEGREES 'NEATH THE
TREES WHERE IT'S SHADY ...



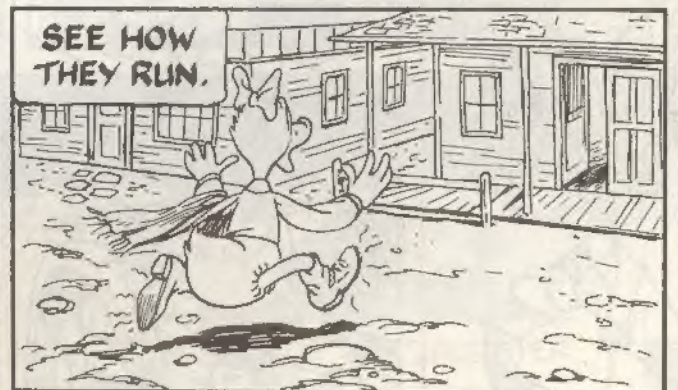
...HUNDRED AND TEN IN THE HOT SUN.

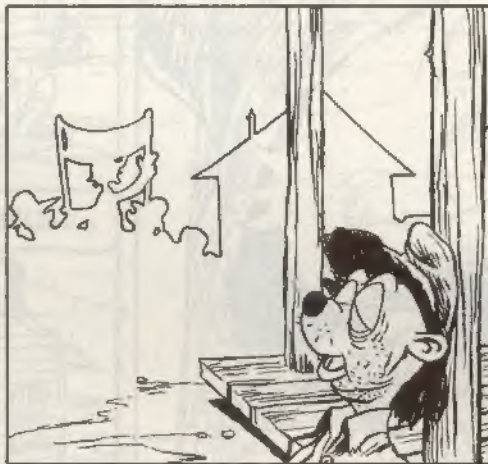
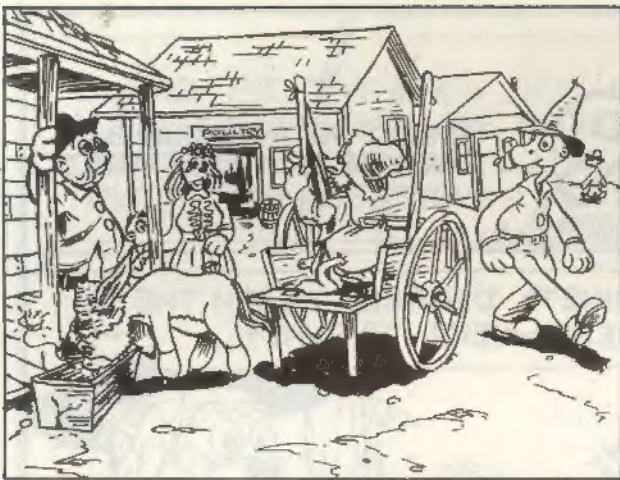


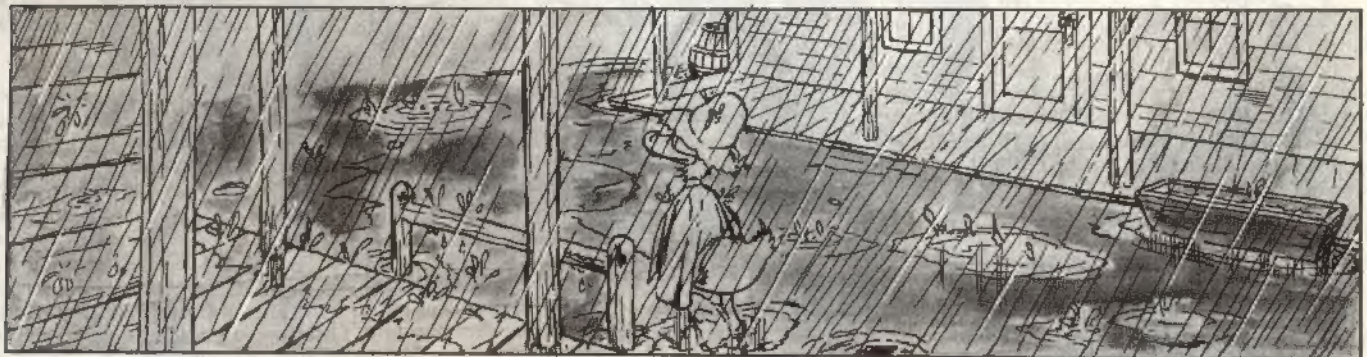
HEAT FROM THE STREET BURNS THE
FEET OF THE LADIES



SEE HOW
THEY RUN.









9 This interview was originally published in the September 15, 1972 issue of the Los Angeles Free Press, and is reprinted here with the editor's permission. --AER

Long before it became fashionable, Ray Bradbury has been attacking the establishment. His novels and short stories are mirrors reflecting the human condition in terms of its weaknesses and ignorance.

Bradbury is a man of all times and places. He can travel back in time for a tidbit from the Mesozoic or ahead into an unknown future such as Fahrenheit 451 where creeping McCarthyism has become the order of the day.

Q: I have heard that your enthusiasm as a boy for science fiction was not shared by others in your community?

Bradbury: I have had many enthusiasms in my life, starting with science fiction when I was eight or nine years old and falling in love with Edgar Allan Poe short stories when I was eight. Nobody else was reading Poe. He's never been in with the academic community in the United States. He's always gotten more popularity in France.

I made up my mind when I was 12 that I was going to write two kinds of fiction. One was science fiction. I wrote a story about a landing on the moon when I was 12. Everyone in junior high school and high school told me not to write this kind of story, that I was very stupid, very foolish. When I was at L.A. High School, I was the only boy in the whole school of 4,000 students, just about, who was reading science fiction and writing it.

Everyone said, "Don't do that. The space age is never going to come. Rocket ships are never going to be built. We're never going to the moon. And we're never going to land on Mars."

I always figured they were wrong and I was right. And that's the way it turned out.

Q: What other stories did you write as a boy?

Bradbury: The other stories that I wrote were stories to scare the hell out of myself. I loved, more than anything else, getting the hell scared out of me. And I loved going to see horror movies when I was 10 years old. This is one of the things older people forget. But I've never forgotten because I love the deliciousness that comes from being afraid.

I have four daughters and I've raised them to be properly scared. I've taken them, starting from when they were six, to all of the worst movies ever made. "The Horror of Blanket Party Beach," "The Creature From The Black Lagoon." I've even written a few of these myself.

Q: Your screen credits include the 3-D picture "It Came From Outer Space." What others?

Bradbury: I also wrote "The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms." The studio didn't write it. They stole it from me. I must tell you the story behind it.

Back about 20 years ago, there was a studio in Hollywood that stole stories from writers all the time. I had heard they were going to be making a film about dinosaurs. The producer called me in to read the script. He said: read it over and tell us if you'd like to rewrite it. Well, I read the script and came back. They asked me what I thought of it. 'It's very interesting,' I said. 'Incidentally, it's very much like a short story of mine that was in the Saturday Evening Post a year ago called The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms.'

The producer's jaw dropped down to the floor. He suddenly realized he'd stolen the story from me, forgotten who he'd stolen it from, and asked me to read it. The next day I got a telegram from the studio saying that they wanted to buy the rights to my story. The end result was a very lousy film.

Q: How have you done with your poetry?

Bradbury: I fell in love with poetry when I was 13 or 14. I've been writing poetry for 35 years and it has never made me any money. Only in the last year and a half have I begun to sell some of my poetry.

Q: Has history always been good source material for your stories?

Bradbury: Yes. The Civil War has always been very close to me. It's a strange period, very sad and unfortunate. More people were killed in that war than in any other war in the history of America.

I would love to do a play on the Secretary of War, Stanton, who was under Lincoln at that time. Do you realize that, on the day he was assassinated, Lincoln went to the war department and begged for a body guard. He knew he was going to be killed. He begged for a body guard and Stanton refused him. That night Lincoln was shot.

Ulysses S. Grant left that morning with his wife on a train. Why? They couldn't stand Mrs. Lincoln. All these fantastic coincidences. If Grant had stayed behind that night Lincoln would have been alive, because his guards would have been at the theatre.

For all we know Stanton hired Booth to kill Lincoln because he had plans to become President of the United States.

Q: Where do you get your ideas for stories?

Bradbury: Where do I get my ideas? My God, they're all over the place! I get ideas everywhere.

I was wandering through the Disneyland Robot Factory in Glendale, the place where they build all those robots

that are far more real than President Johnson and Nixon. I looked at Lincoln's robot, laying out there, being put together for his appearance in the Hall at Disneyland. And I thought to myself, what if a man named Booth ran in here and assassinated Lincoln's robot? That story appeared in Playboy.

Q: What is your opinion of society?

Bradbury: I've always wanted a chance to say something about the kind of society we live in today. It's publicity oriented, newspaper oriented, TV oriented and motion picture oriented.

We live in a very crazy country. A lot of things don't work quite right. But when we do use the vote, it's a way of structuring ourselves, our futures, our needs. So I resent having anyone taking my vote away and to have people like Dr. King and the Kennedys taken away. And the way people rushed in to write books from which the criminal makes money. I'm sorry, I don't like it. I think it's terrible.

Q: Are most of the problems facing our society the end result of our own misdoings?

Bradbury: Yes. Ours is a science fictional world. An example of the sort of thing that's going on is the skyjacks. This is a science fiction development in our society. People are always asking, why do you write science fiction? I write science fiction because everything that's most improbable has happened to us today. Once we didn't have the technology to make it occur. And now, quite suddenly, we are faced with fantastic problems.

I went to a psychiatrist once. I told him I wanted to be an excellent, fine, superb writer. The psychiatrist said, 'all right, get the Encyclopedia Britanica and study the lives of other writers and see how long it took for them to become good writers. The average was 15-20 years. It dawned on me that to be a great writer I would have to dedicate myself and write every day of my life. This I have done for the last 35 years.

Q: You really threw yourself into the screenplay for "Moby Dick."

Bradbury: When Don Houston came along and offered me the chance to write the screenplay for Moby Dick, I was ready. I read the novel through nine different times, went to my typewriter and wrote 2,000 pages of screenplay.

The script finished, I awoke one morning, walked to the mirror, looked at myself and said "I am Herman Melville."

Q: You must have felt a little bit of self satisfaction when the first man finally set foot on the moon.

Bradbury: On that historic day I had been asked to appear on The David Frost Show in London. I went over, ready to be on the show because I wanted people to ask me what it all meant. I'm always ready to tell people what it all

BY MARC SHAPIRO

RAY BRADBURY: AN INTERVIEW



"We can have a clean planet and still die if the sun explodes."

means. To me it was the greatest night in the history of the world.

I waited backstage for about an hour before they finally put on that great space expert, Englebert Humperdinck. And a half hour later they put on that talented scholar, Sammy Davis, Jr. I began to feel unwanted. I left.

After I left that show I did a show called Telstar with the Bishop of Geneva, a scientist and that little girl from Ireland, Bernadette Devlin. So here I was, faced with these three intellectuals who were lamenting space travel.

They were complaining about how much money was being spent on the space program. The little Irish girl probably wanted all the money for the north of Ireland. I guess the scientist wanted the money for himself and the Bishop wanted it for his church.

Finally I could stand it no more. I shouted: No, no! All of you shut up, sit down! You're stupid! You're ignorant! I said, now let's get one thing clear. We have not spent a penny on the moon, nothing. It's all been spent right here.

People have a picture of a rat hole on the moon. They think we take this money and throw it in. Instead, it's been thrown to the people, to feed their mouths, to put roofs over their heads and to buy them cars.

Q: What do you see as the future of the human race?

Bradbury: Three billion years ago we were flung out of the sun by some fantastic cataclysm. It took roughly a billion years for the first rains to fall, the continents to appear, the oceans to form, the first living particles to appear in the sea.

Man is a borrowed creature. Vision from this creature, smell from another and the ability to hear from a third, finally one day forming a spine, crawling out on land, making do in the meadows, hiding in caves, hanging in the trees, building cities and looking at the stars. And during that long span of time, saying to gravity, "you will not keep me here."

For thousands of years we've been terrified of death. Why? Because we were planted in the earth and rooted here by gravity. We couldn't escape. We were doomed to live and die here forever. That is no longer true. On the night we landed on the moon we had finally pulled out our roots and touched eternity and the promise of immortality that goes with it.

It's a religious endeavor to relate ourselves to the total universe. There is no gap between religion and science. We are all equally ignorant of our place in the universe.

But I'm talking about a total future. You cannot be interested just in ecology, just in the earth. It has to be a total approach.

We have plenty of talent and plenty of willpower. Money has nothing to do with it. We shouldn't allow it to change our willpower, our dreams. The dream itself becomes a rich thing. Money comes after the fact.

We can still tend to our civil rights, still clean the oceans and do all the things we want to do.

We must not be subjective. We can have a clean planet and still die if the sun explodes. That's what I'm talking about. The totality of it all. It may seem like a very remote thing to you. That's why I talk about it, I don't want it to be remote. It concerns you and your children's children's children's children to the ten thousandth generation of this world. Mere images of you off far away on some other world--so far away you can't imagine. ●

LETTERS



HARRY WARNER, JR.

I never feel comfortable writing a loc about a fanzine which draws on graphic stories for much of its tradition. I know even less about that field of fandom than I do about the pulp magazines and paperbacks which I wasted my time on. But I thought Realm was one of the best-looking and most coherent fanzines I've seen from comics-oriented fandom. So let's see if I can take a loc as a kind of repayment for your kindness in sending the issue.

It's surprising that more fanzines don't use the format you've adopted. Those nearly square pages have the same advantages that made the 2 1/4 X 2 1/4 reflex cameras so popular among photography fans. It's easy to use a picture without wasting a lot of space, no matter whether it is vertical or horizontal in format. You can run a two-column arrangement on the typed pages without unnaturally short lines, and yet the eye doesn't find too much trouble coping with the straight-across typing. I imagine that the format would also be ideal for something you didn't try in this issue, the straight-across horizontal-format picture spreading over two pages. I shudder at the mere thought of what you must have paid for paper of this quality. It seems ideal for both the half-tones and the line plates.

The material on Arabic editions of comic books is definitely of interest to a person like me who isn't a specialist in the field. It sounds as if it were professionally written, intended for a mass audience, and beautifully put into type. The mirror reverse printing necessitated by reading habits over there is intriguing. Who knows, the next generation in that part of the world may credit left-handed people with having the potentialities of comic book heroes, simply because Superman and

Batman and the rest are presumably doing their thing with their left hands. And it's consoling to know that exclamation points are the same in Arabic as they are in English. It makes a person feel as if he'd figured out some of the language's secrets all by himself without the aid of a textbook and instructor.

Dark Beginning impressed me as superior to most fanzine fiction of this type. I almost wrote most fanzine fiction of the sword & sorcery type, but Vanarin doesn't seem to be in a world where magic is very prominent. It seems instead to be a world where natural things have developed slightly differently from our world, something like the inventions that never were which kept turning up on the television series, *The Wild, Wild West*. Besides, no sword and sorcery hero ever has a three-syllable name, like Vanarin; they're all two-syllable names, for reasons that I've never quite understood except that maybe it's instinctive from the two-syllable names of so many of their authors: Burroughs, Carter, Howard, Leiber, and so on.

Anyway, the story moves along nicely, there's a genuine development of character for the hero which you almost never find in a story of this length in a fanzine, and the narration is smooth enough to indicate that the author should be selling fiction soon. If he isn't already; I'm not familiar with most of the people whose names appear in this issue and I could be mixing up fans with pros.

I got a lot of chuckles from the Archibald Artichoke thing. It gives promise that the writer could create a 20th century Alice in Wonderland without a bit of trouble. And I was completely lulled into a trusting belief that the title was just a come-on, and didn't expect that pun in the final line after such a long and diverse journey to arrive at the play on words which I then realized had been foreshadowed in the very first sentence.

The Doug Potter portfolio was most impressive. He seems to have a good knowledge of the human body, something that isn't always true of artists who try to draw unclad bodies for fanzines, and so his elveses or whatever the young ladies on the second and third pages may be look more real than a lot of human-intended young ladies on fanzine pages.

From the Inside was the toughest nut for me to crack in this issue. It impressed me but I don't know why: maybe the strange, two-dimensional appearance of many of the drawings, maybe some vague similarities to some of Vaughn Bode's art, maybe just the differentness of the calligraphy. I'm not even certain if I understood the message completely: whether it's all meant to be a parable or to be taken as a literal adventure or both.

In general, the artwork is elsewhere on a very high level. Maybe it's just as well that most of these artists are not known in the fannish neighborhoods where I run around most of the time, because it's hard enough now to figure out who should get votes for the fan art Hugo when there are about twenty superb craftsmen eligible for nomination, and the thought of another eight or ten bobbing up is quite disconcerting. The cover seems to have better registration than most professional multi-color work. I particularly like the restrained combination of colors which create a mood that you couldn't possibly have achieved if you'd used every hue of ink in stock. Even the envelope picture is good. Someone somewhere is going to have to invent a filing system for fanzines to cope with the illustrated envelopes and wrappers that are becoming more and more popular. I feel sorry for the people who began to have their fanzines bound professionally back in the era when it was safe to throw away the outer shell and preserve only the interior meat.

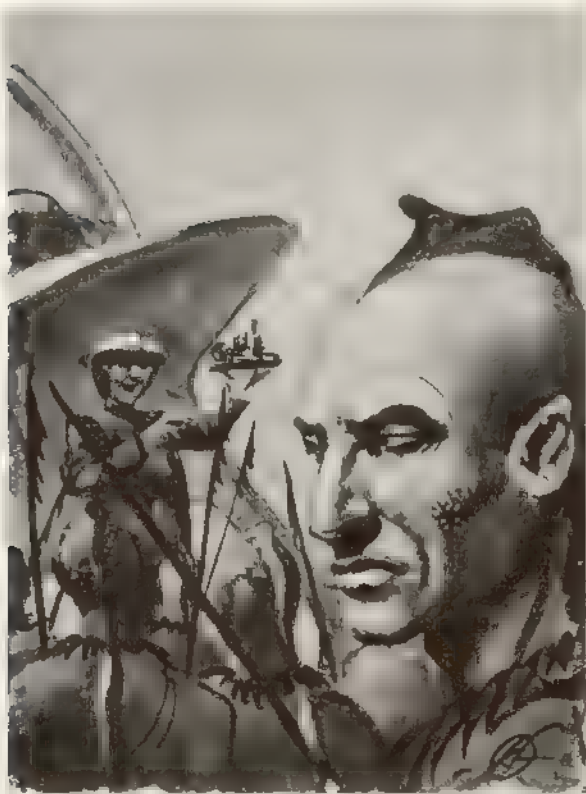
Thanks for thinking about me, and I hope you get some kind of results from Realm that will make all the time and money you're spending on it worthwhile.

GEORGE BARR

I just received REALM 4 and am flattered, both that you would send a complimentary copy, and that you wish to

publish some of my work. The repro is excellent... and that is always a plus factor when I send work to fanzines. The cover and Anderson's "From The Inside" are very nice--some of the best work of its type I've seen. Too many young artists, unable to draw really well, settle on a sort of ritualized distortion, call it "style", and never really learn how to draw. But Anderson, despite that his work is about as stylized as it is possible to be this side of pure abstraction, has such a sure handling of line and area that there can be no quibbling at all about his qualifications as an artist. I've seen few people able to handle white space so well; I'm envious.

One of the disadvantages of having one really good artist appearing in your zine is: everyone else suffers by comparison. Potter handles his mediums quite well--especially in the title page of his folio, but he has some trouble with proportions that can't quite be qualified as style. He's good, but if he would spend as much time observing as he has in perfecting a rendering technique, he'd be terrific.



CHARLIE T. SMITH

I got Realm 2 and 4 a couple of days ago. Great!! Feel sorry for me, Ed... hate very much to praise and praise and praise, yet there can be no one who will not agree that Realm is one of the best fanzines to have ever existed. Sure! Can I think of any better fanzines? Trumpet by Tom Reamy was a beautiful fanzine, but in the first place he apparently no longer publishes it, and in the second place, Realm is its equal (at least). Mount to the Stars was a nice zine--nice-looking--but the contents were pretentious badly put together. Gore Creatures is nice-looking too, and has a regular biannual schedule like Realm, but your zine has a better layout and slick glossy paper. I cannot think of any zine more worthy of its existence than Realm, Ed.

Darrel Anderson is Ingenius. His strip "From The Inside" was one of the best things I've seen recently. The only fault is one that I feel as an individual (and no doubt I am alone in feeling this way): the story is supposed to be Obscure and Meaningful and therefore, Timeless. I enjoy such stories very often, but consider them as academic exercises in which the author has challenged

you to the old Guess-what-I've-said Game (which is basically anti-Intellectual of me, perhaps). The pleasure in reading such material is not in finding revelations to the meaning of the universe, but in comparing what the author is trying to say with what I believe.

Obviously, Darrel Anderson was simply trying to say what he wrote at the end: All answers come from the inside. (There may be subtle additional thoughts which I am not perceptive enough to see.) It is rare that a fan author actually states clearly what he means, and therefore Darrel rather wrecked my little game. After all, what's the fun of fishing if the fish crawl out of the water and into your frying pan for you?

But I did enjoy the artwork. What was the original size of the drawings? [Eight by ten inches. All of his portfolio this issue is printed actual size. --AER]

And I wish you would have told us what Darrel used for the cover--simple wash with colored ink? Water color? You should include this on the contents page in the same line where you identify the cover artist. After all, Realm is actually an art magazine, but selling to the fan art community and not the pro artist. [Last issue's cover was an acrylic painting with horrible printing. Darrel's cover this issue is also acrylic. --AER]

The Archibald Artichoke story was fun; a beautiful piece of the absurd. Phrases like "THE GRAND CONUNDRUM IS ALWAYS RIGHT!" indicate that there was a message here, too, but this time around I'll choose to ignore it.

Jeff May's tale "Dark Beginning" was a really fine piece of S&S. It was an especially clever touch to have the characters speak in a peculiar manner--'getting to put in prefixes--which added to the sense of alien (exotic) adventure. Romance in the old, literary sense of the word.

When I read the article on Superman comics in Arabia ("Ka-el of Arabia???) I thought to myself "God! This is professionally written..." Until I saw that it was taken from what must be a pro journal (Aramco World), I thought the stickiness was an amazing feat. Ah well--I'm a sucker from way back.

Thom Haber, who had some extremely confusing poetry in #2, wrote one of the funniest letters I have yet read. I would suggest that you write him to bottle that humor long enough to write some sort of piece for you. Seriously, you should!

The Potter folio was fine except for the second drawing. It was an unflattering sketch and I don't believe you didn't notice the glaring anatomical error. It's your fault as editor that you let it get in this issue; but it was the only discordant note in the whole zine.

The Cornell does for Jeff May's tale were not especially good, either--but are considered substandard only compared to the rest of Realm and at least equal to what would appear in any other zine.





Meanwhile, the Cornell back cover was really beautiful. I can't decide whether he has a Williamson or a Steranko influence. His 11 does on pages 27 and 33 show a distinct Jeff Jones influence, which of course goes back to Frank Frazetta, as does Williamson. Bah! Enough idle speculation. I'll accept the work as it is.

God--Anderson's strip is haunting. And it hurts to praise so much. But God!!

MICHAEL WM. KALUTA

Thanks muchly for the issue of Realm. I can't tell you how sorry I am that you'll be changing the format--I really wanted to have a portfolio of drawings printed in that size--very neat and charming. It's gotta be a plain case of divine retribution for my slothfulness--ack.

Now let me tell you my reaction to the issue. The cover: possibly the most professionally aesthetic cover integration I've ever seen. A magnificent piece of artistic judgement--I'm impressed. It's an eye-catcher. The design affects me like Steve Harper's paintings--balanced, in a word.

Darrel Anderson's tonal design strip--fascinating. I don't know how people can draw that way. My hat's off to him. Very competent grasp on design.

Through T., S., A.A.T.C.W.A.A. kinda didn't affect me. Four Pages--Doug Potter: Doug's got the imagination and the beginnings of craft, but if he wants to avoid some real bitchy headaches he should start putting more hours into basic anatomy construction and basics of drawing a la George Bridgman. Technique can be acquired later on (in fact it comes by itself), after the ground rules have been learned by rote. Conan the Buccaneer by Frank Frazetta is a technical masterpiece, but it's Frank's knowledge of drawing and design that makes it (and all his covers) the blockbuster it is. Technique is the sauce, not the meat, of a good illustration. If he doesn't learn the basics--all of them--now, he'll kick himself in later years. Take it from one who knows.

John Cornell can use this advice too. Basic anatomy construction is fun--honest! If my recommendation is not good enough, let me list a few artists who swear by them: Barni Wrightson (the Boy wonder), Jeff Jones, Frank Frazetta (the Master), Roy Krenke, Al Williamson (my mentor).

it's Bridgeman all the way. Bridgeman and sweat (a lot of both) is an unshakeable foundation to build on.

JOHN KENT

Finally, after six months of waiting, Realm #4 has arrived. I can understand the necessary practice of advertising a fanzine months before publishing it, but nevertheless I felt cheated with the final product. In the Feb. ERBdom, #4 was advertised as having a Barni Wrightson checklist. But the issue in fact has nothing of the kind, just an apology and half-promise for a future issue. I'm sure you didn't deliberately write a deceptive ad in order to gain readers, but still the product delivered (after a very long delay, even for a fanzine) was not what was advertised. This is one of the reasons I've quit collecting comics because this type of faulty ad has rooked me before. I won't ask for my money back because you seem to be losing enough money on this enterprise as it is, but with mistakes like this, it's no wonder. If and when you actually manage to print a complete Wrightson checklist, let me know (after it is printed) and I'll risk some more money. Cheers. [Mr. Kent will receive a free copy of this issue's checklist. --AER]

WILLIAM BLACK

Please excuse the long delay in my writing. Paragon has become such a time-consuming thing that my correspondence has fallen off. In fact, you've gotten out two good issues of Realm since I last wrote.

I enjoyed them both quite a lot. In your fourth issue, Darrel Anderson provided a visual and literary treat with his "From the Inside", an experimental strip that worked quite well. I was quite taken by his stylized renderings. The unusual lettering was quite unique and fit the story perfectly, even though it didn't reproduce as well as it might have in places. The panel layouts (except for the second and third pages...too much text?) were excellent and the story flowed from beginning to end.

Anderson's cover was another job well done. I really dug its symmetry and balance. It was also centered perfectly on the page, something you rarely see.

Cornell's back cover was a strong piece. Good contrasts of black and white...and good reproduction by your printer. I'd like to see more of Cornell's work.

As Editor, you did a fine job in the layout of the entire book. The placement of art and articles worked well together, and this is important.

"The Royal Visit" left me cold. I don't feel that it worked as a strip. The first page had some nice effects, but it didn't tell the story. The second page had some nice effects and DID tell the story. Perhaps the second page would have been enough.

That piece of art of mine that you picked up was an old one. If memory serves me correctly, I drew it around...1960? Looks like I inked it around 1968! Glad you

"I don't know how people can draw that way"



Congratulations on the superb showing this year, Ed. It's getting to be a showdown between M'no and Realm; only one other feature appears, and that's the S.M.U.T. strip from Coffinworm.

MATT HOWARTH

A time ago, I ordered Realm 5 prepublication. Since I haven't received my copy yet, I'm writing to question when it's going to be out, as I'm waiting for it to. Please reply so that I don't sit around here waiting for nothing, okay?

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TIM KIRK

Many thanks for the beautifully produced issue of Realm, and for the Conan poster. Why don't you use more of your own work? Your Beggar was among the best drawings in the issue.

Comics are not my specialty, but I've always had three heroes in comic art: Carl Barks (creator of Scrooge McDuck and other Disney comics), Walt Kelly and Hal Foster. I buy every Pogo collection that comes out, and I'd collect old Prince Valiant strips if the prices weren't so inflated... Sigh. Collecting's an expensive business, and I'm a struggling art student.

Thanks again for thinking of me.

[I admire your taste in comics, Tim. Speaking of Carl Barks, special thanks to Buddy Saunders for supplying the unpublished Barks art on this page. --AER]



could use it. Enclosed is a more recent drawing... of the Girl from LSD. Don't know if you can use it or not since Realm is not very "comics" oriented.

One thing that I missed in Realm 4 was a strip by Ed Romero. Granted a third strip in #4 would have been too much, but here's hoping you'll be back in action in #5.

CARL GAFFORD

Excuse the delay in answer, but boy, have I been bogged down with work. Here are the results of the 197 BPP Awards, first and second choices and points each.

- BEST ZINE: Realm--30 pts. Minotaur--21 pts.
- BEST WRITER (strip): Gaff--21 pts. Romero--17 pts.
- BEST ARTIST: Romero--26 pts. Gaff--15 pts.
- BEST ARTIST (pencils): Gaff--21 pts. Romero--14 pts.
- BEST ARTIST (inks): Romero--22 pts. Gaff--18 pts.
- BEST SINGLE TEXT STORY: "The Great Obscenity Raid" by Buddy Saunders--26 pts. "Friend of a Friend" by Rob Rucker--8 pts.
- BEST SINGLE STRIP: Metzengerstein by Poe and Gaff--12 pts. Maya by Romero and John Cornell--11 pts.
- BEST STRIP SERIES: Bobcat/Hermat--16 pts. S.M.U.T.--11 pts.
- BEST WRITER (text): Rob Rucker--24 pts. Sheldon Wiebe--11 pts.
- BEST SERIES (text): Le Nombre--15 pts. CAT--10 pts.
- BEST COVER: Minotaur #10--29 pts. Realm #3--18 pts.*
- BEST SINGLE ISSUE: Minotaur #10--25 pts. Realm #3--22 pts.

*There is a slight irregularity here, because those who voted on the covers rarely said which cover of an issue they liked. Like, Minotaur #10 had five front covers and three back covers. Realm #3 has a front and back cover. How to separate the votes when they are incomplete is a problem. So in desperation I just lumped all votes together when they were for a zine. We should discuss the feasibility of this category in the BPP Newsletter and see if we wish to continue it.

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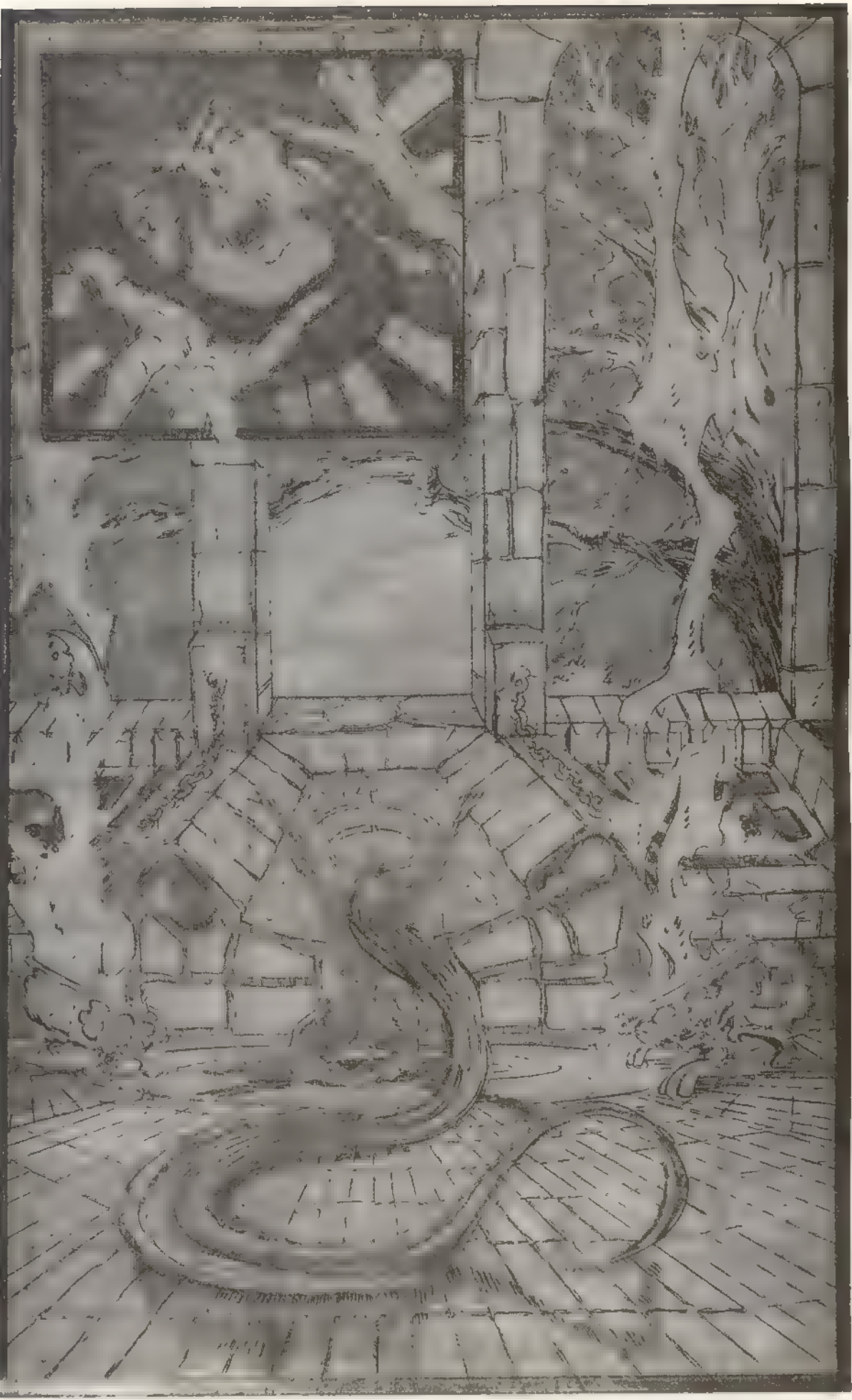
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THE GUARDIAN

by
JEFFREY
MAY



Desperation is the look in the eyes of a hard-hunted man. Desperation is his harsh, gasping breath as he crouches in hiding. Desperation is Vanar, hiding in the slums of Tiaria from the pursuit of the Surenan Watchmen.

Clutching his sword in a bloodied fist, Vanar crouched lower as the thud of krystam paws and the falls of running feet grew louder outside. His mouth quirked wryly as the incredible mischance that had hounded him here appeared to him again...

He was tying up his boat on Tiaria's waterfront in the foggy morning, thankful that the long voyage from the Retreat of Aann was over. A deep and saddening strain had grown between Kinna and himself in the 48 days they had sailed together. Twice in the early days of the voyage Kinna had come to him in the night, only to tear herself away with a burst of tears. The second time she had lain crying nightlong, and she did not come again. From the docks he had escorted her through the quiet and yet-deserted streets to the house where Kinna said her mother's folk lived, the door had opened to them, and then as Kinna was ushered in, there was a cry of "Ay! The exile! The rapist! Catch him!" and then the daylong chase that led here, in the beautiful evening twilight over Tiaria.

Downstairs there was a resounding crash as the burly shoulder of a Watchman broke open the boarded door of Vanar's refuge. Quietly as possible Vanar began to retreat toward the rear of the abandoned old mansion, a relic of the time when Tiaria was the southernmost and greatest port of the Diamond Empire. The sounds of search spread below, and Vanar hesitated. Behind him was an auxiliary stair, up which pursuit was sure to come, yet just before him was a huge formal staircase four *rhua* across, and Watchmen swarming at the bottom. He hesitated a moment longer, and then as footsteps clumped up the lesser stairway behind him, he took his chance, darting for the dark hall beyond the wide stairs.

"Ai! There he goes, across the stairs! Take him alive!" A crowd of Watchmen charged up the stairs after him. As they neared the top there was a loud groan from the ancient timbers and then a splintering crash as part of the huge staircase collapsed from the unfamiliar weight on it. Quickly he darted through the servants' quarters, down two more flights of steps, up from the cellar, and into a street behind the mansion.

As krystam paws thudded behind him, warning of new pursuit, Vanar fled round a corner. Hope! Ahead the street was filled by a large street carnival, well attended. He plunged into the crowd and began to weave rapidly among the spectators. Behind him a squad-man's trumpet shrilled and he could hear Watchmen shouting. Performers and viewers alike scattered or milled in panic as the Watch raced through the crowd after Vanar. Vanar broke through the crowd and dived into a tent. He fled deeper into the tent complex that housed the carnival folk, but suddenly he stopped. Grimly he wiped the sweat from his sword hilt. "I am not without Honor," he whispered to himself. "Here they will have to slay me."

The sounds of the search grew closer. He could hear cries of alarm and curses as the Watch searched for him through the tents. He wished they had not seen him enter: Surena law forbade entry without a warrant unless a fugitive was pursued into a house. Soon the searchers were only a couple tents away. Vanar tensed, ready to fight. At that moment a hand grabbed his free wrist and vigorously pulled him through an exit behind him.

Taken by surprise, Vanar was pulled off balance through two tents before he could recover, and when he started to resist there was a fierce whisper, "Come on, Stupid One! Hurry!" At a loss, Vanar followed obediently as they ran through the tents, into a door, a cellar, two dim floor-level rooms, another cellar, a shadowed alley, and finally another abandoned mansion. There his rescuer stopped and removed a face-covering scarf. Vanar stared, for his rescuer was a girl.

They rested for a few minutes, listening to the sounds of pursuit grow confused and then fall silent. At last the girl took his hand and led him out into the slums

of the Old Quarter. A fifth-glass later they entered a mansion as old as any in the Quarter, but better preserved than most such. She unlocked a featureless door with nothing about it to indicate someone lived here. The door swung inward into darkness and she led the way fearlessly. Vanar followed, beginning to relax at last, but suddenly in that dark room he was possessed by an uncontrollable surge of sheer terror. He drew his sword and whirled.

The girl was as alarmed as he for a moment, and then she laughed. "Did Habubba frighten you? Don't fear, he never moves. Did you think him an ambusher?"

"I--no," Vanar said, in some embarrassment; in justification he added, "Zoar gave he a--a second sight for sensing danger, and that statue--"

"Habubba?" She began to laugh merrily. "Second sight--danger in Habubba!" she sputtered and went off into another peal of merriment.

Vanar was somewhat nettled. The statue which she had named "Habubba" (a common clown's name) was to his mind scarcely a figure to inspire laughter: Formed of some hard, white, waxen material, it stood some seven feet tall, and its features, which were not detailed but merely suggested in stylized outline, still suggested sternness and strength. The thing was clothed in rough wargear of a bygone age--hairy leather trousers, laced to the knee, antique scale mail and a conical metal helm, all suggesting great age, yet curiously untouched by time. It stood at attention, and in one hand it held a massive old iron sword point-down in the position called Sentry's-Rest. Vanar searched for words to express the abysmal fright that the statue had stirred in him, gave up, and took refuge in formality. "I give you greetings and bless you for your succor. I have not your name."

She tendered him the graceful curtsy of a well-born Surenan girl, incongruous in the filmy, revealing dancers' silks she wore, and answered, "I am Zymah. Why was the Watch chasing you?"

Vanar sat down on a large cushion and told his story without embellishment and without sparing himself: his Surena-candidacy, his celebration of the end of long years of study, his drunkenness and the rape that followed, his 15 years of exile, his part in the plans of the Pirate Prince to sack the citadel of the holy men of Aann, and his meeting there with the victim of his lust. He told her of his struggle of spirit, his remorse at his betrayal and of the penitence he had imposed on himself, his killing of the Pirate Prince and all that followed. At last he said "That is all," and he fell silent.

Zymah sat quietly for a moment, and her fingers dabbed briefly at her eyes. "A loose eyelash," she said, seeing he was watching her.

Vanar said, "I have not your story."

"There is little to tell," Zymah replied. "I was the daughter of Telmi val Zymar, of Poldu Range." (Vanar must repress a start. Her family and his--a dull pain--were near neighbors; from the front door of Dyrilki val Jabotar's Great House one could see the Telmis estates.) "I had just turned sixteen when I met and eloped with a young singer named Dzigoai, and my father, I learned later, formally disowned me. Dzigoai caught the hill-fever; he died before we could find a priestess of Zataiyu to marry us. I could not go home so I came here. I live well on what I earn from my dancing, and I have many friends in the Quarter. It is not a bad life, except for Donalkis and Myégar."

"Who are they?"

"You know the law on a disowned girl. We belong to whoever can catch us, on our captor's terms. Those two want me for a slave. They pursue me constantly. I suppose they will catch me one day," she said calmly.

"Then why did you help me?" he asked. "You were endangering yourself, surely."

She looked him in the eyes and smiled. "I have been chased too many times myself. Come," she said abruptly. "This is only my kitchen. I live upstairs." She led him up a flight of wooden stairs that creaked, into a rather barren kind of sitting room.

There, Vanar approached her and put his hands on her waist. "I have gratitude to you," he said.

Without rancor and without looking up at him she put his hands away from her. "I could do nothing else," she said. "You must sleep out here, for my bed is within." She gestured to a stout door.

Vanar did not protest. He quickly made a bed of a folded sitting rug, a blanket, and a silk cushion and laid himself down. He could hear Zymah moving about within her bedroom. As he dozed off alarm shot through him and he leaped erect, crying "Harai!" and reaching for his sword.

Zymah threw open her door. "Vanar! What is wrong?"

"That statue," he said rather shamefacedly. "I--I dreamt it was alive and threatening me. Why in Zoar's Holy Name did you ever get it, anyhow?"

"I didn't," she said. "Earlier this year, on the fifth morning after Friends' Day, I rose and went downstairs for my morning meal, and there he was. Oh, what a fright I had! I am certain some of my friends, those I trust with the location of my home, left him for a belated joke. He is too heavy for me to move and so I let him stay. Besides, I have always felt--well..." She shrugged charmingly. "I feel safe with him here. I like him."

"Well, I don't think he approves of me," Vanar said smilingly.

"Oh, I'll speak to him then," Zymah said merrily. She went to the door and called down the stairs, "Habubba, leave Vanar alone! He is my guest, do you hear?"

Still chuckling, she started back to her room. Vanar caught her hand a second and bade her good night.

"And you, too, Vanar." She closed her door and Vanar laid himself down. Whether from Zymah's admonition or his own calm, the statue troubled him no more that night.

The next day began tediously, for he must hide in Zymah's apartment while she went out to dance. Before long he began to explore, hoping to find something that would tell him a little more of this girl who had befriended him. The downstairs chamber was empty save for "Habubba" (*To call a thing like that after a clown!* Vanar thought.), some cooking utensils, a few raw vegetables in a bin, and an iron brazier for cooking.

The outer of the two upstairs rooms was sparsely furnished, as Vanar had seen: a low table, one good sitting rug, several cheap cushions, and the older, faded rug Vanar had used for a mattress. In a corner was a wooden book-chest of good quality which contained a variety of works: epics, histories, tales of travel, and even some fiction.

At the door of Zymah's bedchamber Vanar hesitated; finally, he entered, albeit with a slight twinge of guilt. The room was surprisingly large and well-lit: A large leaded window was set in the far wall, with heavy drapes for concealment at the sides. A floor bed stood with its head against the wall, and beyond it a clothes rack and clothes chest. On the bed's right side a scarred and battered lady's dressing table stood against the wall, doubtless discarded and later salvaged by some street vendor for resale. Built into the table's wooden back was a dented silver mirror; propped below it was a jointed wooden doll, its tiny garments worn and its painted face chipped. To the right of the doll was a small portrait of a middle-aged man, his face both stern and kind. Left of the doll was a shallow, silk-lined box of perfumewood, and in it was a lock of brown hair. On the red silk were several pale spots, and it was a moment before he realized, with a twinge of sorrow, that these were tear stains.

As he did so he paused, for his absorption had been such that he had not noticed the change in the room. Before, it had been bright and cheerful. Now the daylight streaming in through the eastern window had a disagreeable brassy glare to it, and the shadows were threatening. For some reason he thought of the statue, and he found he could not cast it from his thoughts, even after he had left the room. Twice he tried to sleep, and twice gave it up, for each time he closed his eyes the statue rose before him. In exasperation he even used charcoal, dust, and some water to prepare and anoint a simple Exorcism of

Demons, and then drew up the figure for a Primary Laying of the Restless Spirit, two small spells which he had committed to memory. The only effect was to leave him bone-weary, with no diminution of the tense atmosphere. As night fell and Vanar began to expect Zymah back, he took a chance and slipped down to the street, where he bought four live *tiza* from a street vendor. These he took back to Zymah's home. Like all Suren-candidates Vanar had learnt the basics of cooking, and he had little trouble preparing a meal. Oddly, the fearsome feeling diminished as he worked, so much that when Zymah finally came in it had disappeared.

Zymah came and leaned over his shoulder to see what he was preparing. Casually he embraced her and drew her to him, kissing her. She hesitated and then firmly removed his arm from around her shoulders. As before Vanar did not press her. They ate quietly, with little speech, and then they went upstairs. "I will not ask how it was today," she said, "for it must have been tedious."

"Not entirely," he said. "Habubba diligently kept my nerves on edge all day, and I did a bit of snooping."

"Snooping?"

"Yes. I saw a doll, and a picture, and a lock of hair."

Zymah nodded, her head bowed. "Yes," she said. "The doll is mine, of course. The Portrait is of my uncle. He opposed my father's plan to disown me. I keep it to remind me that there is always someone whose hand is not turned against me. The--hair is Dzigoai's. It is all I have of him." For the remainder of the evening there was little talk and Zymah went to bed early.

Both of them arose at the first light of morning.

Zymah was going to Malukam Park to dance, a long, exposed, dangerous journey justified only by the rich rewards her dancing there always earned. And Vanar, though he did not tell Zymah, had planned an excursion of his own.

Zymah left, wrapped in her cloak. Vanar waited until he was sure she would be well away from the house and then carefully tousled his hair, drew a ragged lap-blanket around himself for a cloak, and smudged dirt on his face. So disguised he took his sword and slipped out.

The streets of the Old Quarter by day are a jumble of vendors, pedestrians, workers, entertainers, and ordinary sightseers. The Old Quarter does not become dangerous until after dark. Vanar slipped through the throng, increasingly more confident in his safety. It was not until he neared the edge of the Old Quarter that he was reminded of his danger. As he rounded a corner, he found himself looking at his own face.

This adorned a large poster captioned "Pursued by the Watch: A returned exile named Vanarin Dyrilki. 20 vranka reward" and his picture. It was not, Vanar thought ruefully, a bad likeness. As casually as possible he walked on, waiting until a considerable distance away to lift a fold of his blanket-cloak over his head, as if against the day-heat. Twenty vranka! They must want him badly indeed. A man could live for a year on but one vranka, if he were frugal. As he started to move on his heart sank a moment, for he saw a man dressed in fine clothing that was none too clean turn to look at him. He would swear he saw recognition in the man's eyes, but the fellow turned away and did not follow him. Or rather, he did not follow until Vanar was nearly out of sight. Then he began to pursue him cautiously, looking from time to time at a copy of the pursued poster in his pocket.

It was then that Vanar saw that which froze his blood and struck his heart: An open carriage drawn by two krystai clacked past him, and seated in it were two girls, one about sixteen, one a year or two younger. A noble's pennant, that of the Earl Vinamsin, fluttered above the carriage on a staff, and the carriage was preceded and followed by four mounted guards in livery. "Symalu; Falistya, he called to them very softly. Then with great haste he began to follow the carriage. As he hurried, unthinking of the pursued posters, the Watch, or aught else, he wondered how closely guarded his sisters would be.

From one wearing a "borrowed" overcloak of red silk sewn with gold thread they were scarcely guarded at all. His filched finery got him to the floor just below theirs

in the Emperor's Rest, the finest inn in Tiarra. There he rolled the cloak up and hid it and slipped unnoticed onto the servants' stairs. Pretending to be on an errand, he went to those rooms which a well-bribed delivery-man had told him were theirs. Cautiously checking for guards, he entered their rooms, listened a moment, and then boldly stepped into the room. "I give you greetings," he said. "Is there any wine?"

His sisters had stood in alarm as he entered without warning. Symalu, the elder, whispered, "Oh, Holy Zataiyu!" and sank down onto a divan; Falistya's eyes opened very wide and she hurled herself against her brother and began to cry noisily. Symalu came to him silently, though her shoulders shook with sobs.

"Vanarin, you shouldn't have come. There are pursued posters everywhere, and the Emperor's Rest has guards," Falistya said.

"Hush, Falla," he told her affectionately. "No one saw me enter, and no one will see me go." But in this he was wrong.

Below in the street the man in soiled finery, whose name was Myegar, paid five therri to a certain delivery-man, who spoke volubly for so much silver. Directly he had heard what the delivery-man said, Myegar hastened off in search of the Watch.

Meanwhile, Vanar and his sisters were eagerly exchanging news. He had already told them of his part in the storming of the Retreat of Aann, news of which had raced to Sartad via a Surenan wargalley which had passed the Retreat of Aann the day after Vanar had left. They had heard only the barest account via the heliographs and they were thrilled at his adventure and appalled at his danger. For his part, however, though he had thrice asked them about their family, they had evaded his questions. Finally he grasped each by the arm and demanded to know what passed at home.

There was a moment's silence and then Falistya began to cry silently; her sister turned pale, swallowed hard, and said, "Father has the Gray Sickness."

Vanar felt as if he had been struck in the pit of his stomach. "Are--are they certain?" and realized how foolish was his question. There are only a handful of diseases which are absolutely incurable, and of these the Gray Sickness is one. No physician would ever diagnose it unless he was certain. "When was it seen?" he asked.

"In the afternoon of Harvesting 29, the fourth day after Friends' Day, our neighbor Telmi val Zymar died of it. The following day Father fell ill, and that night the physician said--said..." Symalu began to cry.

"When are you returning?" he asked. "I must make my plans to come and see him."

"Oh, no, Vanarin! You mustn't! You are still an exile, and if Father saw you he could feel bound by Honor to give you up to the Surena. You must not come! Promise us you won't!" they cried as one.

Vanar shook his head. "I must come," he said. "Whatever follows, I must see him. It is a matter of Honor."

"No, Vanarin. He will surrender you and you will be beheaded. What--what about that girl? Zymah. She needs your help. She is even more of an exile than you. You must not--"

Symalu's further words were cut off by a heavy fist beating on the door and a shout, "Officers of the Watch, with warrants. Open in the Name of the Surena Empire!" With a great heave Vanar pushed a marble-topped table against the door to delay the Watch and fled through the door by which he had entered. As he jerked it shut he had a glimpse of his sisters: Falistya stood speechless with great tears rolling down her cheeks; Symalu was sobbing tearlessly, shaking her head, no-no-no. The sight screamed in his mind as he fled for his life.

Somewhat later he stumbled into Zymah's house, his face expressionless under its grime. She was there, and she jumped up in horror as he entered. "Vanar, are you all right? Where did you go? What is..." Her voice trailed away as Vanar walked wordlessly across the room and sat crosslegged on the older sitting-rug. "Vanar, what has happened? In Zataiyu's Name, tell me!"

"I saw my sisters, and they told me that my father



has the Gray Sickness. The Watch broke in and drove me from them, and there was horror in their faces," he said in a voice that was completely flat and without emotion. Zymah said nothing. What was there to say? Vanar drew his use-knife and inspected it. Its edges were keen, its point sharp-honed. "Where is the nearest Place of Zoas?" he asked in that same toneless voice.

"Why, in the Street of Pfallmir's Triumph, about three streets away. But there is a shrine to Zoar in the next street if you wish to pray for your father," Zymah said, mystified. Had he gone mad?

Vanar took from his belt all the silver he had. "For your hospitality," he said as he thrust it at her.

"But you will need--"

"No. I will need nothing but my knife and the Place of Zoas."

Zymah went cold as Vanar's intent struck her. It was an old custom, and falling into disuse, but many men still believed that life was the gift of Zoas and that it was permitted to return that gift if it grew intolerable.

"Vanar, no! No!" Zymah was seized by a horror so great it shocked her. "Do not throw away your life. Please!" Zymah wrenched the knife away from him and threw it across the room. The violence of her fear that he would slay himself shook her. Frantic with this terror she embraced him and drew him down to her. "No, Vanar. Do not die. I--I need for you to live." As she kissed him passionately, her fingers began to draw off their clothes.

Late in the afternoon of the second day following these events, Vanar strode cheerfully down the Street of Leatherworkers heading for Zymah's house. He was untroubled by fear of the Watch, for his black hair was now several shades lighter and a fearsome scar marked his forehead, both these changes courtesy of a certain friend of Zymah's, a man expert in the alteration of one's appearance. On this day he had gone out to test the intensity of his pursuit. He had found as many pursued posters as ever, and in lazy gossip with a Watchman at a pastry-vendor's stand, had learned that a promotion was offered to the man who caught him, this plus twenty vranka. He had replied with a (rather insincere) wish that the Exile be taken soon and had gone his way.

Vanar made his way back toward the Old Quarter leisurely, enjoying the colorful flurry of life in Tiaria. He spent two brass sajarn at a blade-edger's booth, waiting while the old man inside sharpened and stropped his sword to the keenness of a razor. Farther on he came to an open-air slave auction; usually the slaves sold at such were of decidedly inferior quality, but the young girl who now stood on the platform was a beauty, and Vanar paused to watch until she was knocked down and an aging man was pushed up after her. He purchased a yarma fruit and munched on its bitter-sweetness as he strolled. Once he heard the slap of a strap and a girl weeping, doubtless another slave. He paid little attention, for it was a common thing. At last, as the Luminary began to descend behind the Olomukam Mountains that loomed on the western horizon, he found himself on the fringes of the Old Quarter.

Vanar had not gone far when he met a group of small boys racing down the street as fast as their grubby legs could carry them. They spied Vanar and ran toward him. "Master! Master!" cried the biggest of the street urchins. "Lady Zymah--she--come quickly! Two men--they are chasing her! They--" Vanar waited to hear no more. He drew his sword and ran the way they had come.

Ahead was a grim scene in a street bazaar. Three men with dull, coarse faces--waterfront louts, doubtless--were wielding cudgels against a crowd of the Old Quarter, holding them back while two laughing men pursued a slender figure that ran and dodged desperately among the stalls of the bazaar. Sensing Vanar's approach, the crowd parted. Ahead of him one of the toughs lifted his club menacingly, but Vanar's Surena-trained reflexes sent him dancing aside while a terrible slash of his blade at the man's leg sheared through muscle and bone alike. Vanar charged toward the pursuit, leaving the tough to sit and stare stupidly at his lower leg, some ten feet away.

One of Zymah's pursuers saw Vanar and prudently ran.

The other was almost too slow: Vanar's blade hissed down at his head, but the stroke missed, and instead split open his leather jerkin and the back beneath it. Vanar would have finished him, but another of the three toughs had approached unnoticed and swung his club. It grazed across Vanar's forehead, and he felt something tear loose excruciatingly. Before the blood could come he stabbed the tough in the stomach and began to retreat. Incredibly there was no blood, and Vanar realized that the false-skin "scar" had been torn loose. He looked down at the man with the slashed back and they gaped at each recognized the other. Here was the man Vanar had seen look at him in the street that disastrous day! There was the wanted Exile! As Vanar and Zymah retreated, Myégar was able to get to his feet and run.

A half-glass later, Vanar and Zymah were safely at home. Zymah was loudly insisting that she be allowed to tend Vanar's wound, while he insisted that it was only a graze under the false scar. At last he allowed himself to be led downstairs and the skinned place on his forehead washed. As he sat quietly under Zymah's ministrations, he noticed an odd air of benignity, calm, and approval in the room. He cast about for its source and then realized that it seemed to come from the statue.

Three days later Vanar was hastening along a certain street, keeping a sharp lookout for signs that he was being followed. Urgent business had taken him into the streets much lately, and he had detected what he was certain were human shadows on two occasions. Each time, however, he had failed to catch the man he had seen. At a clothier's shop he entered and asked if the traveller's clothes he had ordered were ready. They were, and he paid over two therri, fourteen sajarn for them. Feeling satisfied, he went outside.

On the evening of his rescue of Zymah, he had decided that she should leave Tiaria. He spoke to her at length of this, dealing with each objection she raised.

"But I have no place to go!"

"What of your uncle? Would he not take you in?"

"But I do not know what I need."

"A krystam, suitable clothing, money for food and lodging, and the papers granting you your father's permission to travel."

"My father's permission! I certainly cannot get that!"

"Are there no forgers in the Old Quarter?"

And at last Zymah had allowed herself to be convinced that it was possible. Proudly she led Vanar into her bedroom, saying, "I will try if you will help me, Vanar. Here, I would show you something." She led him to a cleverly hidden cabinet in the wall, and from their hiding-place she took thirty-one flat, rectangular pieces of gold, each stamped with the quill pen and sword of the Surena Empire and placed them in Vanar's astounded hands. "It will require money, will it not? Here is what I have earned in my three years of dancing."

"Thirty-one vranka?" he gasped incredulously. Thirty vranka was a small fortune.

She shrugged. "I am popular, and my needs are few. Surely it will be enough," she said.

Enough! Even though Vanar had bought her clothing and (at her insistence) a krystam for each of them, he had not spent even two of the rectangular pieces of gold.

When Vanar left the clothier's, he bore the garments back to Zymah's home. She was not there, and so he placed the clothing in a leather bag in which she had already packed most of her toiletries. As he started to leave, he hesitated, and then he went quickly to the cabinet in the wall and removed the gold. From Zymah's dressing table he took her childhood doll, the portrait of her uncle, and the hair of her first love. All these treasures he put into her bag with the gold, and only then did he wonder, *Now, why in Zoar's Name did I do that? Surely that is a poor hiding-place.* Nevertheless, when he left the room, he left the gold in the bag.

There now remained only the documents Zymah would need to travel, and so Vanar determined to go and see if the forger he had found had finished them. In the downstairs room, as he prepared to go out, he was struck without warning by a force so strong his knees buckled.

Gasping in surprise and shock he drew his sword before he realized the blow had not been physical. "Zoar's Name!" he gasped. Again he tried to go, and again the force hit him. *Stay! Stay!* he felt something command. Incredulously he turned to face the statue, and he felt a thrill of horror when he saw that it had turned slightly and now faced him.

"*Rhakusar chylini ul falintarnai Zoas, Zoarij, tar Zataiyé varulin!*" he shouted. The magical grip slackened and he plunged through the door.

Once outside he returned to his purpose stubbornly. "At least we shall leave that accursed statue behind when we go," he muttered to himself as he hurried down the hall. Before going on he checked the two krystai stabled in an outbuilding behind the decaying mansion. Assured that they were all right, he made his way to the writing-merchant who was to prepare Zymah's false papers.

This was a very old, very small man who had a small shop in the Square of Lon's Victory, a musty place cluttered with shelves and stacks of old books, rolled scrolls, and obscure manuscripts the old fellow had bought for a sajar in hopes of turning a small profit some day.

On his first visit to the shop Vanar had not had time to look around; all his attention had been focused on arranging the deal with the old man and on describing what the papers must say. Today, though, Vanar was waved to a seat at the desk where the old man normally sat while the latter attended a gray-haired man dressed in silk. As he sat he noticed behind the old shop-keeper's vacant chair a shelf of magical texts. Vanar was no magician, but his Surena education had taught him the fundamentals, and he recognized that the old fellow's selection was choice.

Directly his rich customer had left with his finds, the bookseller came and took his seat. From a drawer he took a leather folder stamped with the Surena pen and sword and gave it to Vanar. "Will you inspect these, sir?" Vanar opened the folder. "I have prepared a Permit to Travel, identity papers, an Affidavit of Freedom, a Certificate of Destination, and since you said you could not travel with her, I have composed a letter that should secure her the protection and company of any military or government official. Is all the data on the documents correct?"

Vanar nodded. "I cannot tell them from true permission-papers," he said in a marveling voice. The old man chuckled. "I do not often do such work any more, unless the fee is enough," he said. "I am too old and my eyes are weak. But I will vow that short of a personal inquiry in Tiaria those papers will stand before any inspection. She can travel all the way to Poldu Range with those, with you or alone. If you are satisfied, I will take my payment."

Vanar paid over four vranka with a will; 'twas two or three times what an ordinary forger would ask, but the old man's skill was beyond belief. "I see you have a most excellent selection of magical texts," he said, meaning to compliment the old fellow.

"No, young sir. Those are not for sale. They are for my own use," the old bookseller replied. "In my own small way, I am a student of the magical arts. My interest lies in the lore of the past, the strange and bizarre."

"Indeed? Then perhaps my experience will be of interest to you..." and Vanar proceeded to describe his experiences with Zymah's statue.

The old man was silent a long time after Vanar had finished speaking. Finally he said, "I know something of what you describe, young man, though I did not believe any of the things yet existed. The custom has died out."

The barbaric Iabarna tribesmen, founders of the Mountain Kingdom that grew into the Surena Empire, had many eerie customs, of which it is not fashionable to speak nowadays. It is not unknown for a man to conceal relics of such left him by his forebears and never tell anyone, even his children, of their existence. Yet none ever discard these relics. The old customs are respected still. Of these customs, the Guardians were one.

"In the old days, when war parties might pour into the Iabarn Valley, or slavers come, a man worried about his family or perhaps the family of his chief or clan-



drawings by
BARRY
SMITH

leader might propose himself a Guardian. He would go to the shamans and make arrangements, and then he would slay himself or wait until Zoas withdrew his gift of breath, and then the shamans would come and take him and with awful ceremonies entomb his body and spirit in a waxen effigy. This they would clothe and arm as a warrior of those days and lay it under a spell that when threatened a danger those it guarded could not fight against, it would quicken and defend them. The Guardians possessed many awesome powers, of which only a few are known: supernatural strength, the ability to travel great distances in a single night to be with those it guarded, and others now unknown. It passed itself along as it saw fit, going where it was most needed. But I see you are disbelieving."

Vanar flushed. "In all respect, learned sir, I cannot easily believe that a man in a waxen shell could move. That his unfled spirit might trouble me--aye, that surely, but..." He shook his head. "It is too much."

The old bookseller smiled. "My young friend, I try to pass on a bit of my years' wisdom from time to time. To you I say, all truth and virtue and worth are not taught in the Surena Academies," and as Vanar went white and reached for his sword, the old man continued, "and one may well see past a disguise without intending treachery. Fare you well, and may you and the girl go safely."

Vanar bowed respectfully and left the shop, musing on what the bookseller *or* magician had told him. About five minutes later certain facts in his head fitted themselves together and the bottom dropped out of his world. His sisters had said Telmi val Zymar had died on Harvesting 29, which is the fourth day after Friends' Day. Zymah had said the statue appeared on the fifth day after Friends' Day. "To travel great distances in a single night..." Vanar whispered in shock, and swiftly he began hastening toward Zymah's house in the gathering night.

The nearer he got the more he hurried, for there swelled in his thoughts the tension he often felt when danger lay hidden before him. As he entered the now-familiar area around Zymah's house two of the street children saw him and ran up shouting, "Master, come quickly! Those men are after Lady Zymah again! They are at her house!" Vanar began to run. He had been right. Donalkis and Myégar had had him followed, and now--

With drawn sword Vanar rushed into Zymah's house, fully intending to surprise Donalkis and Myégar as he had done before. Unfortunately, Donalkis and Myégar had come prepared for this. As Vanar rushed through the door someone tripped him and he was borne to the floor by at least five large men. Someone hit him with a padded club and the world went dark.

He recovered consciousness a few minutes later, to find himself in Zymah's bedroom, firmly held by two burly toughs. Zymah stood beside her bed with her arms gripped from behind by a suavely smiling man whom Vanar guessed to be Donalkis. Myégar stood beside them. The girl's face was white with terror. Besides the two who held him, eight or ten turly, stupid-looking men armed with knives, clubs, and short spears stood around the room. "Ah, Master Vanarin, I am most glad you are already awake," Myégar said cheerfully. "We mean to sample Zymah's charms here, and we--ah--both enjoy an audience."

"You must," Vanar said lightly, nodding to the slavers' little hired army. "Do they expect a turn as well as watching?"

"En? Oh, nay. We wished to be not-driven off by you, and so we brought plenty of men, is why they are here. We are paying them enough silver to revel for a tenday in the brothels, if that is what they wish. Zymah is for we two alone." He turned to the girl.

"I would leave her alone if I were you," Vanar said in a different tone from the bantering voice he had just used.

All looked at him in amazement. The hired toughs fingered their weapons. "May one ask why?" Myégar asked in genuine surprise.

"The statue downstairs--it is a supernatural guardian of her family. When her father died" (Zymah gave a small, choked gasp.) "it came here to her. If she is threatened with danger it will come to life and--"



Myégar broke into laughter. "You speak of the Guardian downstairs? My boy, I am quite aware their powers are a myth! It was a good idea, however. Now to pleasure," and he tore Zymah's robe open to the waist.

"Myégar, I tell you..." Vanar fell silent. For a moment he thought he had imagined it, but then he was sure. The stairs from the room below were creaking, the floor beneath his feet vibrating as if a large, immensely heavy man were slowly ascending the stairs. The toughs fell silent. One ran to the heavy door, slammed and barred it.

"Fool!" Myégar snapped contemptuously. "All old houses creak and vibrate. It is the wind does it!" He shoved Zymah so that she fell backwards onto the bed. Donalkis caught her wrists.

The two men froze. From beyond the thick door could be heard heavy footsteps. They paused without the door and for an instant there was dead silence. Then a mighty blow tore the barred door from its fastenings and hurled it across the room. The Guardian stood upon the threshold.

The Guardian entered the room. Though its footfalls were heavy it moved as lightly as a lad of ten. The head, which bore only the outline of a face, turned from side to side surveying the scene. In the hollows of its eyes were two glittering sparks of blue-white fire.

The room was plunged into a whirlwind of turmoil. The men holding Vanar let him go and hefted their cudgels. Donalkis released his hold on Zymah and sought to run past the Guardian. It snared him with a flick of its huge hand, gripped him by an ankle, and swung him face-first into the wall. Donalkis dropped to the floor, leaving a red-stained, man-shaped indentation in the plaster, and he did not move again.

One tough rushed at the thing, seeking to thrust it in the throat with his spear. The Guardian slapped the spearpoint aside, seized the wretch, and hurled him the length of the room. Screaming frightfully, the man crashed through the leaded window and disappeared into the night beyond. His wail ended in a *thud*. Another rushed the Guardian and got his head crushed by a lightning-fast fist.

Vanar finally came alive. Zymah was staring with horrified fascination at "Habubba" and the carnage in her bedroom. He stood her on her feet, seized the bundle of clothing with the gold in it (The reason for his impulse, and its source, now became clear to him.), and led her to the window. Vanar stepped through the gaping hole left

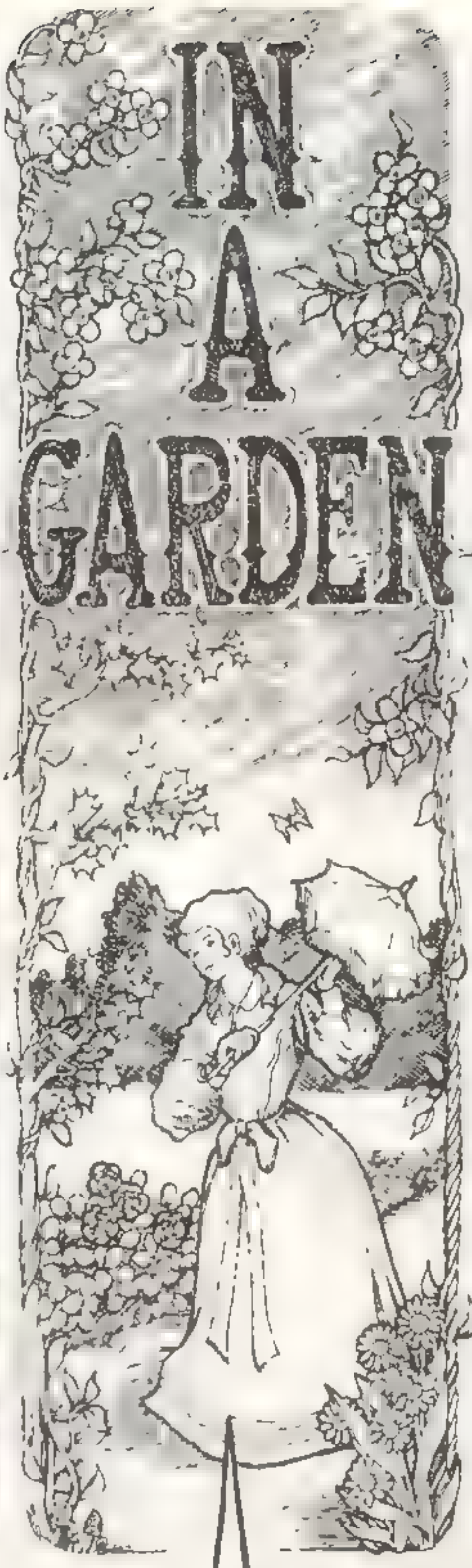
by the tough's departure and aided her to follow. As they climbed down to the street they could hear awful screams and sounds of destruction in the room they had just quit.

Beside their krystai Vanar helped Zymah to quickly don a riding dress of heavy material. Then they mounted and rode for the city gates as fast as they could go.

Once outside the city, Vanar pressed for as fast a pace as he could, for he preferred not to be questioned about the doings in Zymah's house. After nearly four hours of riding he halted, for Zymah was reeling in her saddle from fatigue. Fortunately he espied a half-burnt, deserted, and very old farmhouse by the light of the Lesser Luminary, and here they spread their blankets for the night. Exhausted, they slept dreamlessly in each other's arms.



≡FZZT≡REGULAR OR-
BIT ESTABLISHED≡PRE-
PARE TO LAUNCH SURVEY/
CONTACT VEHICLE≡BZZP≡



AHH...WHAT
A BEAUTIFUL DAY
FOR A WALK IN
THE GARDEN!



≡FZZZT≡WE'RE GOING
TO TRY THAT LARGE
NORTHERN LAND MASS
FIRST≡BZZZ≡



≡ SNIFF ≡
≡ SNIFF ≡



≡ FZZT ≡ ATTENTION
MY FELLOW RATIONAL
BEING! WE HAVE
COME FROM BEYOND



EEEEK!
A TALKING BUG!!

Many Wrightson fans were disappointed when this checklist did not appear in Realm 4, but let me explain just what happened. A few weeks before the issue was scheduled to be printed, I sent a copy of the completed checklist to Berni Wrightson by way of his friend Mike Kaluta. I did not have Berni's address, and wanted to get his approval for the list as well as find out if he could make any additions to the list to make it more complete. I received no reply, and soon it was time to take the issue to press. Since I didn't want to hold up the issue, and didn't care to print the checklist without Berni's additions and approval, I substituted the article on Arabic editions of American comics at the last minute.

After the issue was mailed, I got Berni's telephone number from Mike, and called him to ask him what had happened to the checklist. Berni said he "never saw any checklist," but told me that he had a hard time keeping up with his art himself, and that any checklist I might compile would probably be more complete than his own memory and records.

I then called Mike to ask if he was certain he had given Berni my checklist and letter. He said that he was sure he had done so, but that Berni Wrightson "has a memory like a flower." Uncle!

Berni Wrightson Checklist

Compiled by
MONTE BEAUCHAMP
& CHARLES E. KORBAS

Introduction by
ED ROMERO

Comic Books

- Witching Hour #3: "And in a Far-off Land" (8 pg. story)
" " #5: "The Sole Survivor" (7 pg. story)
The Unexpected #116: "Ball of String" (2 pg. story)
" " #119: "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall, Who's The Deadliest of All" (8 pg. story)
" " #121: "The Hound of Night" (1 pg. story)
" " #128: "There's More Than One Way to Get Framed" (9 pg. story)
House Of Mystery #179: "The Man Who Murdered Himself" (3 pg. story)
" " " #180: "Scared To Life" (3 pg. story)
" " " #181: "The Siren of Satan" (10 pg. story)
" " " #183: "The Dead Can Kill" (3 pg. story)
" " " #186: "The Secret of the Egyptian Cat" (10 pg. story)
" " " #188: "House Of Madness" (8 pg. story)
" " " #191: "Night Prowler" (3 pg. story)
" " " #193: Cover
" " " #194: Cover
" " " #195: Cover and "Things Old... Things Forgotten" (10 pg. story)
" " " #201: Title page
" " " #203: Title page
" " " #204: Cover and "All In The Family" (9 pg. story)
House Of Secrets #92: Cover, contents page and "Swamp Thing" (8 pg. story)
" " " #93: Cover
" " " #94: Cover (with Alan Weiss)
" " " #96: Cover
The Spectre #9: "Abra Ca-Doom" (9 pg. story)
Showcase #83: Nightmaster "Sing A Song Of Sorcery" (23 pg. story)
" #84: Nightmaster "Come Darkness, Come Death" (23 pg. story)
Green Lantern #82: Page 13 inked by Wrightson
" -Green Arrow #84: Neal Adams and Wrightson, artists
Tower Of Shadows #8: Cover
" " " #9: Cover
Creatures On The Loose #10: King Kull "The Skull Of Silence" (7 pg. story)
Chamber Of Darkness #7: Cover and "Gargoyle Every Night" (7 pg. story)
" " " #8: Cover
D.C. Super Spectacular #4: Covers and 5 interior pages
Submariner #36: Inked by B.W. over Sal Buscema's pencils
Weird Western Tales #12: "El Diablo In A Time To Die" (4 pg. story) pencilled by Neal Adams and inked by Wrightson

- Swamp Thing #1: Cover and "Dark Genesis" (24 pg. story) plus 2 small drawings on "Swamp Things" page
Challengers Of The Unknown #74: "Dark As Death" (one pg. story)

Magazines & Books

- Web Of Horror #1: "The Game That Plays You!" (6 pg. story)
" " " #2: "Mother Toad" (5 pg. story) and "Breathless" (7 pg. story)
" " " #3: Covers, centerfold "Comic Art Contest", and "Feed It!" (6 pg. story)



Creepy #9: Drawing on Fan Club Page
 The Conan Reader: Dust Jacket
 Larry Ivie's Monsters & Heroes #3: "Guest artist of the issue" includes 2 pp. of art by B.W.

Gothic Blimp #6: "Ghastly Horror Comics"

" " #7: "Maudlin Love"

Blast #1: "Beneath The Dignity of the Apes" (5 pg. satire)
 The Monster Times #1: "Nosferatu" (2 pg. story) and 3-color centerfold poster

Esquire, March 1972: "Redneck" (1 pg. in full color)

Swank: "Purple Pictography" strip written by Vaughn Bode, drawn by Wrightson, 3 pages each issue. Wrightson art appeared in Nov. '71, Jan. '72, Feb., Mar., Apr. '72 issues so far.

Castle Of Frankenstein #17: "A Case Of Conscience" early Wrightson strip

Bad Time Stories: 52 page paper-bound book entirely by B.W. Full-color covers

Witchcraft & Sorcery #7: Eight illustrations for the story "Thirst" in collaboration with Jeff Jones. One is a double-page illustration.

Nightmare #9: Illustration on back cover in 2 colors

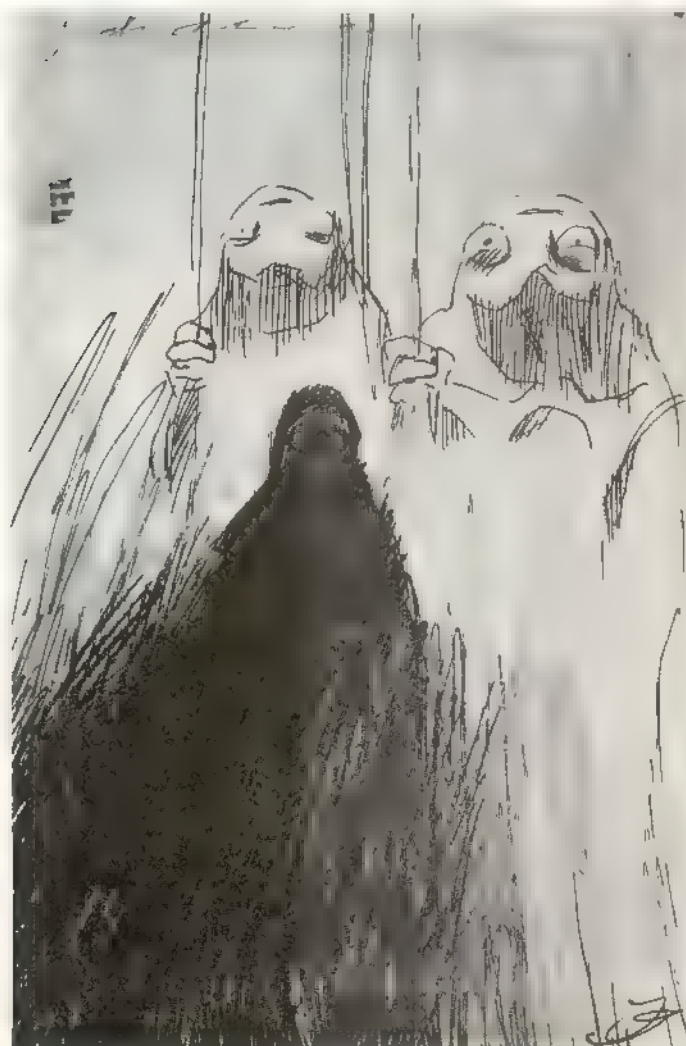
OUR
HERO



Fanzines & Misc.

Squa Tront #2: "Profile: Berni Wrightson" with 4 full-page drawings by B.W. and a little info on him

" " #3: Inside back cover (one page strip), and one full-page drawing of Nightmaster



Trumpet #8: Back cover

" " #9: Small drawing on pg. 12

Contact: Sketch on cover (adzine; issue unknown)

Fan Informer #21: Sketch on back cover of Nightmaster

Detroit Triple Fan Fair Program Booklet 1970: Ad on pg. 6

Spa Fon #4: Two interior illoes (one full-page), and back cover

" " #5: Centerspread, 4 interior drawings, and back cover, plus inside back cover

Seraphim #4: Full page sketch

" " #5: 4 full pages by Wrightson

This Is Legend #1: Cover painting, "The Legend Of Sleepy Hollow" (11 pg. story) in collaboration with Jeff Jones and Alan Weiss

I'll Be Damned #1: Full page drawing and "A Talk With Berni Wrightson"

" " " #2: "Stake-Out" (4 pg. story)

Infinity #1: Cover and 4 interior pages

Graphic Showcase #2: "Uncle Bill's Barrel" (8 pg. story)

Gosh Wow #3: Cover

Xanadu #1: One drawing done in collaboration with Jeff Jones and George Puckett

Anomaly #2: Inside back cover

RBCC #72: Back cover Web Of Horror ad, one panel by B.W.

Witzend #7: "Limpstrel" (2 different one-page strips)

Amra #49: Sketch on pg. 13

RBCC #86: Full color cover

Fantastic Fanzine Special #2: One page pencil drawing

Washington Con Booklet: Cover

Wonderful World Of Comix #6: Sketch on pg. 23

Fantastic Fanzine #13: pg. 20 by Wrightson

Creation Con Booklet 1971: One pg. drawing reprinted from Infinity #3

MCR #4: Sketch with a letter from B.W. (authenticity of this piece is in question)

Helix #1: Drawing on pg. 20

Comic Crusader #7: Sketch on pg. 11

" " #11: Drawing on pg. 17

Phase #1: One pg. drawing

I'll Be Damned #3: Color cover, inside front cover, and "Out On A Limb" (6 pg. story)

Scream Door #1: Cover, contents page, and a piece intended for a Web Of Horror cover

Mad Star #1: Sketch on inside back cover

Imagination #1: "Conjure Woman" (3 pg. story)

Abyss #1: Cover and "Wrightson's Revolting Rhymes" (8 pp)

Infinity #2: Four pages of Wrightson art

" " #3: 3 page folio and back cover

Reality #1: Drawing by Wrightson accompanying the Jeff Jones interview

" " #2: Pg. 5 by B.W.

Drawing on Newsletter from Graphic Masters

" " ready sheet ad for '71 Metro Con

Poster sold to help finance Abyss

Spectacle #1: 4 pages of cartoons reprinted from The Baltimore Sun (Wrightson worked on The Sun for a little less than a year, 1968)

Comicology #6: Sketch on cover

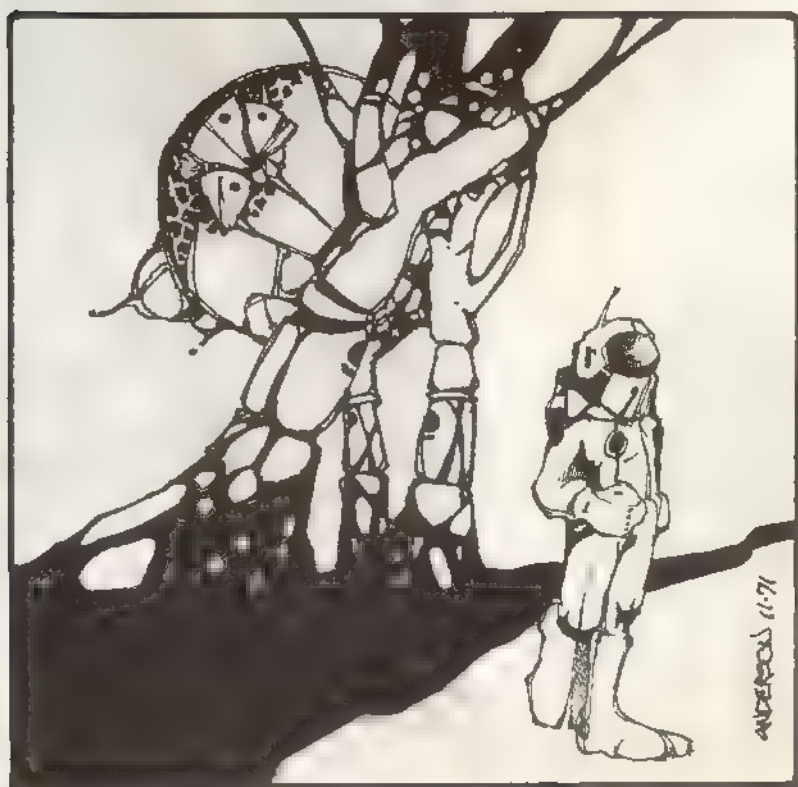
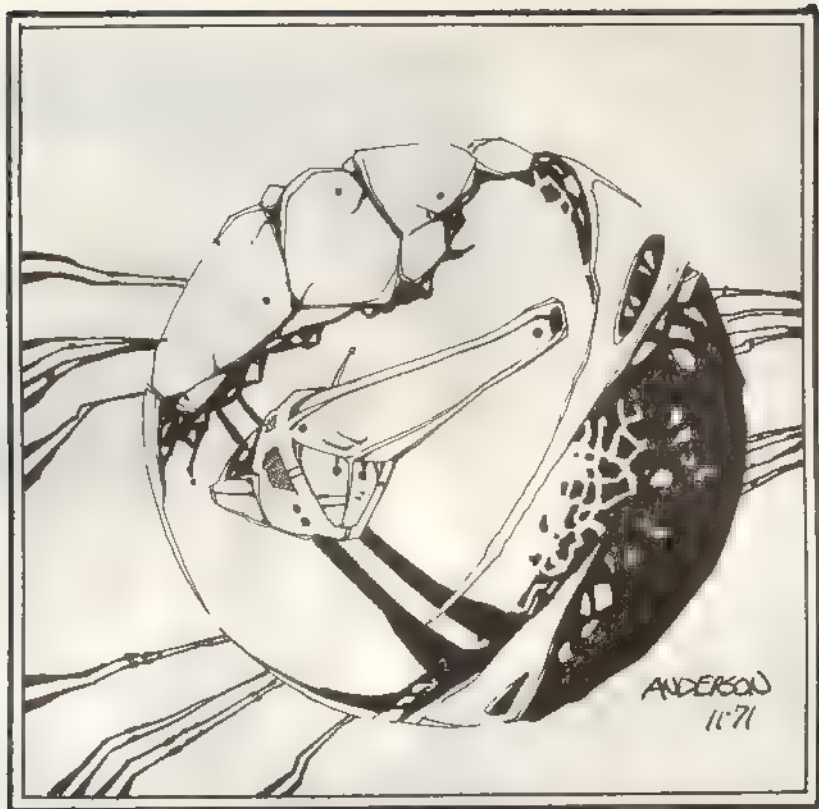
Although this checklist is far from complete, I hope it will be of some use to those who collect Berni's work. I could never fully express my appreciation of all the hard work that was done by Monte Beauchamp and Charles Korbas in tracking down a lot of this obscure fanzine work. Thanks must also go to Mike Kaluta and Berni himself for putting up with my annoying phone calls. If you wish to help keep this listing up to date, or make additions to it that we missed, just write Monte at 1932-23 St., Moline, Ill. 61265. He'll dig hearing from other Wrightson fans!

OLEA

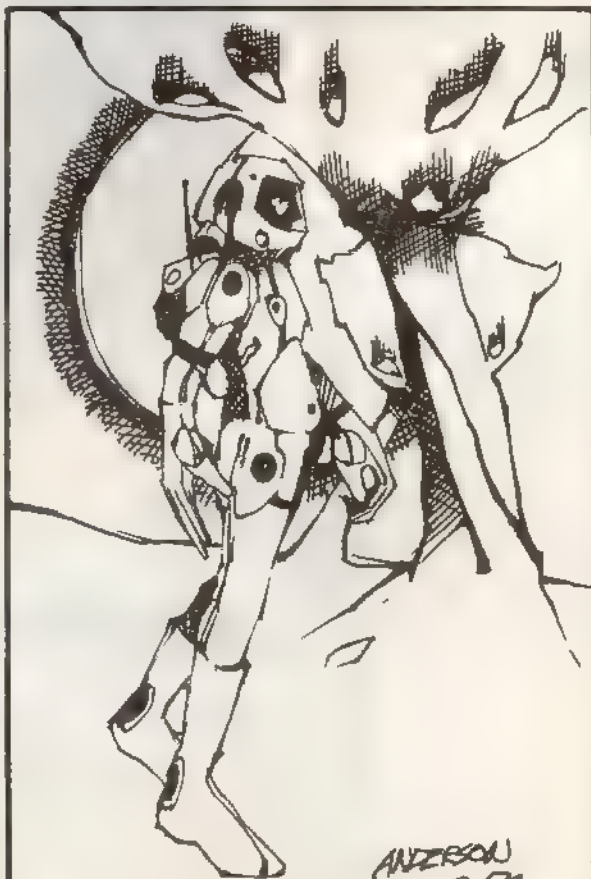
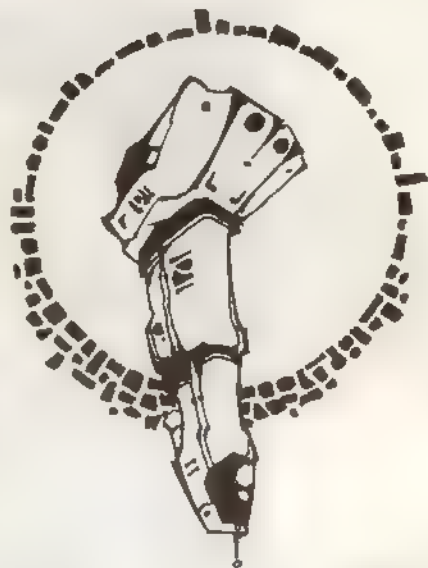


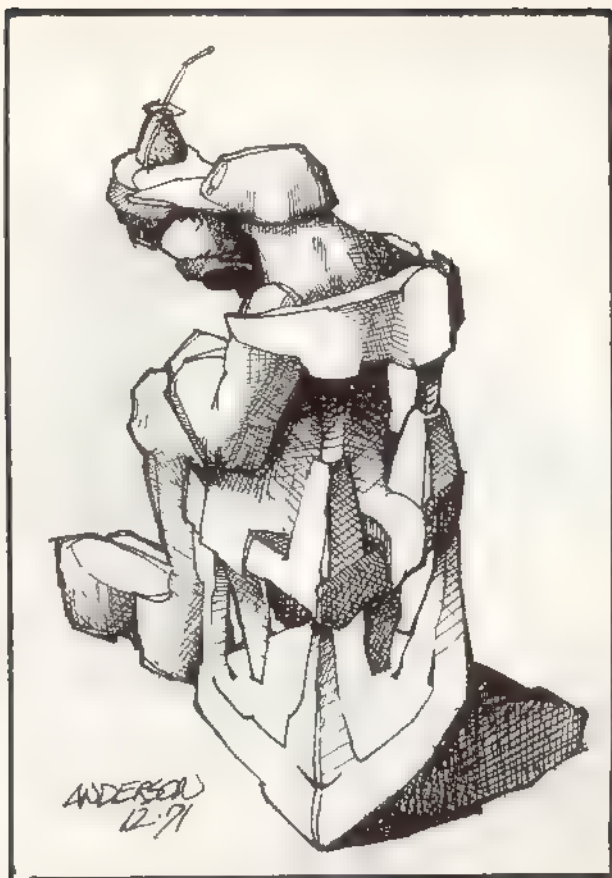
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PORTFOLIO
BY
DARREL
ANDERSON

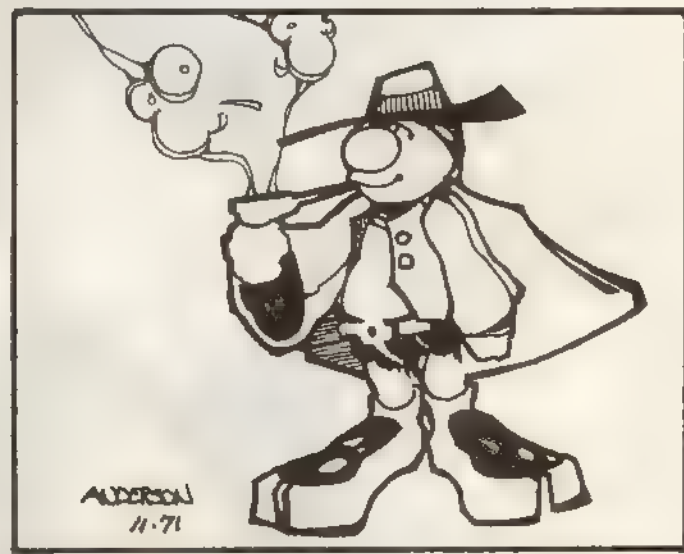
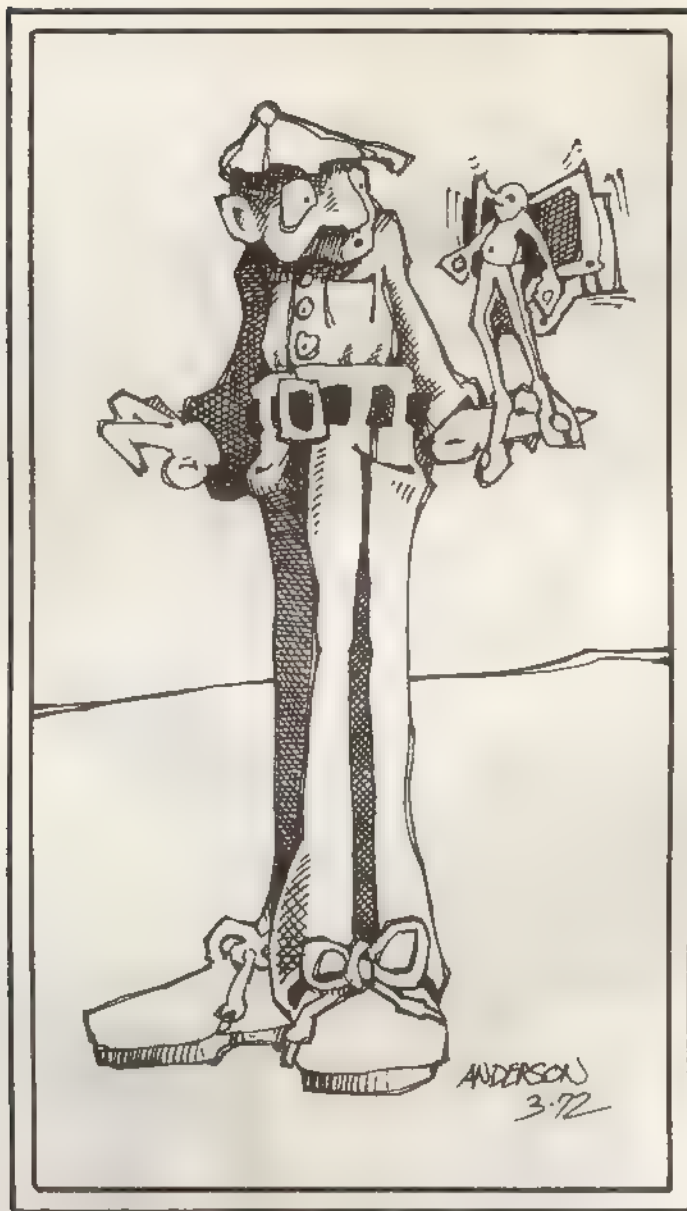


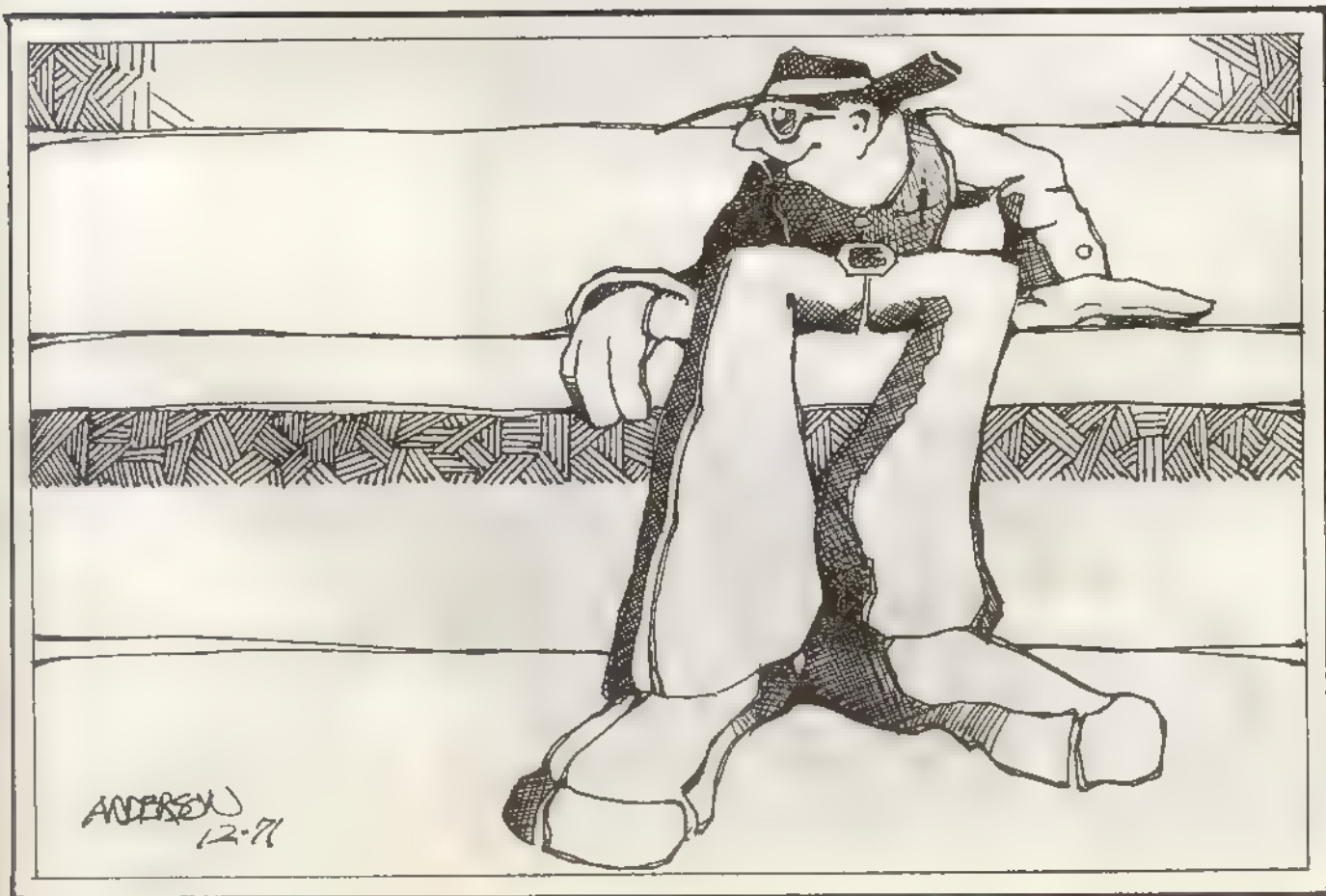
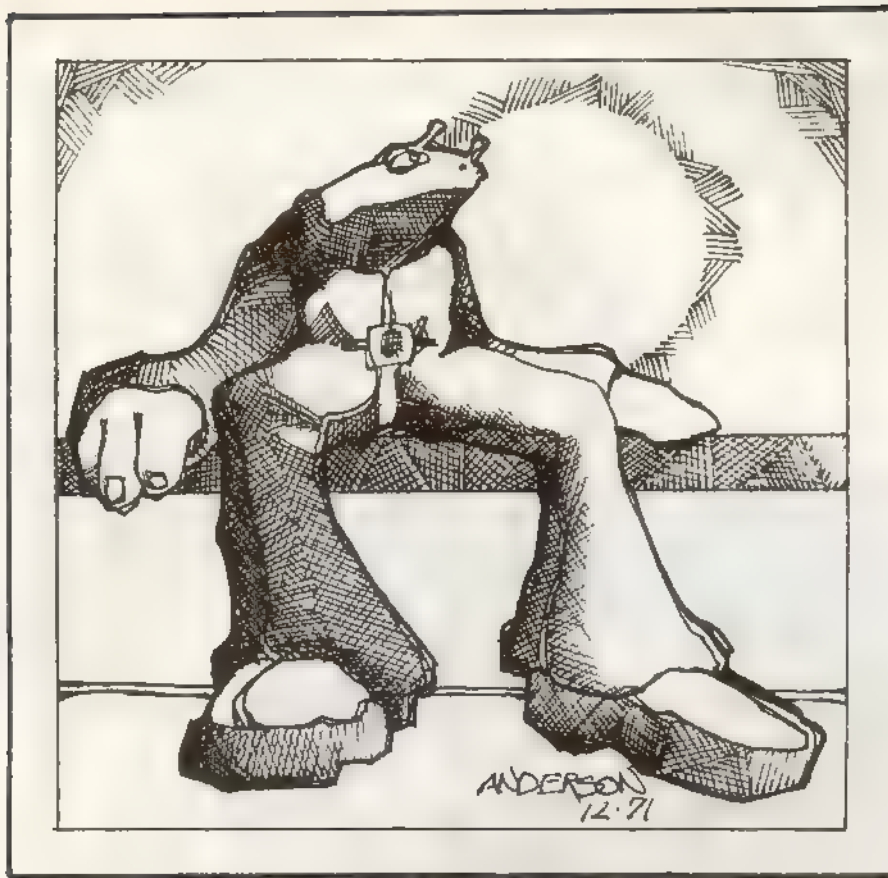














IN REVIEW

by Ed Romero

Heritage is a new five dollar surperzine (or book, perhaps) devoted to nostalgia and comic art. The first issue, #1-a, spotlights Flash Gordon in his various incarnations. The artwork is superb, beginning with the front cover, an Alex Raymond ink and watercolor drawing which is printed in color. Three satirical Flash Gordon comic strips are presented, by Jeff Jones, Mike Kaluta, and Frank Brunner, the latter being a "Smash Gordon" episode. The Kaluta story was the highlight of the issue for me, and probably one of the best graphic stories Mike has done. Two Flash Gordon portfolios are included, by Kenneth Smith and Gray Morrow; both are very fine. There is also a Frank Frazetta back cover, a pencil portrait of Buster Crabbe. All of the graphic features are four pages in length, with a one-page introduction consisting of a couple of sentences by the editors and a sketch by Al Williamson.

Al is also on hand to conduct an interview with Buster Crabbe. Although the interview is sufficiently interesting, I object to the editors' statement that "Buster Crabbe is Flash Gordon." I've met Buster Crabbe, and he is nothing of the sort. Try putting him in a spaceship and see if he can fly it to Mongo!

Allan Asherman wrote a 3-page review of the Flash Gordon movie serials, which is presented with a great number of perfectly reproduced stills.

Although the printing and paper stock are the best to be had, the typesetting and layout are poorly handled. The editors would do well to find themselves an experienced layout man for this work.

If you're a big Flash Gordon fan, you shouldn't pass **Heritage** up. If you're not, you could find the very fine graphic features to be worth the price. [**Heritage**/ 394 Dan ex. Street/ Lindenhurst, N.Y. 11757]

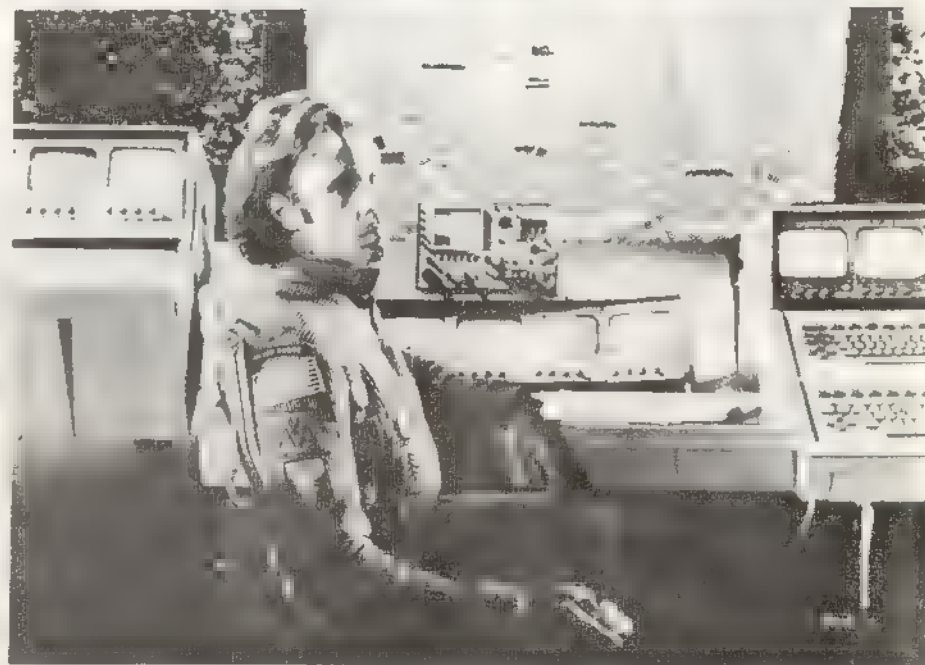
Silent Running is the latest in the current trend of "relevant" youth-oriented sf films. The plot involves a man's efforts to save the last forests in the solar system, which happen to be growing under transparent domes on a fleet of gargantuan space ships in deep space. Bruce Dern plays our hero, and is assisted in his quest by a trio of "drones"—small, childlike robots.

Although I enjoyed the film, it seems to suffer from poor directing or a badly paced script. The special effects were very good, especially the drones. I can say that if you like science fiction, you'll probably find **Silent Running** worth your time. The music, incidentally, is by Joan Baez. Two scenes from the film are shown in the stills at right.

The second issue of Kenneth Smith's **Phantasmagoria** is a treasure-trove of magnificent art and story...to say the least. If you don't have it and you are an artist, an art lover, or a collector of magical objects, **Phantasmagoria** should be number one on your "must get" list!

I've listened to I Think We're All **Bozos** On This Bus, the Firesign Theatre's latest sf album, at least fifteen times, and I'm still fascinated by it. The Theatre has created in **Bozos** a world of logical magic and illogical science so complex and meaningful/meaningless that new implications and relationships are revealed with each listening. Unless you're straight, **Bozos** is highly recommended.

Fantagor #2 has the best color work ever presented in an underground komik. The covers are beautiful Corben paintings, though the separations are bad on the front. On the original painting, the sky was totally pink, but on the printed cover it varies from orange to green to brown. George Metzger has an eight-page strip entitled "Cycle"; it's full-color on quality paper. Corben has only one story in the issue, but it's also an eight-page color job. It's called "To Spear a Fair Maiden", and is written by none other than Jan Strnad—another hilarious Razar story. There's also a page by Herb Arnold and a lengthy Jaxon strip. **Fantagor** is a good buy, even at a dollar a shot.



"ONE BIG MAC PLEASE."

George
Proctor

"Goddamn!" I muttered out loud.

"What's wrong, dear?" Lana questioned.

"What's wrong?" I returned. "It's 4 a.m. It's cool. The speed limit is 65 m.p.h. and here we are crawling along at 55 m.p.h."

"Oh!" Lana said. "You mean Buddy."

Buddy was right. Buddy Saunders, erstwhile comic huckster, slumlord, and friend, was pulling a trailer loaded with funny books (comics become funny books when I'm irritated) that was in none too fine condition. I had been given last minute instructions to drive slow and to keep glancing in the rear view mirror to make sure he was still on the road.

I cursed again resolved to my fate, like Aeneas saddled with his father on his back.

True to our meager beginning on this journey to the Kansas City Science Fiction and Fantasy Society's first attempt at the old con game--Mid-America Con I--we arrived in Oklahoma City during morning rush hour. However, hunger gnawed at our stomachs and a stop for breakfast let the heavy traffic pass.

By 8:30 a.m., we were on the road again. Now, driving is a boring task for me, but driving through Oklahoma is a miserable fate, nothing but rolling hills--dismal. A road sign along I-35 did say Guthrie, Okla., and I was struck by a sense of closeness to one of my childhood folk heroes, Woody Guthrie. I also wondered how he wrote such beautiful songs in such desolate country. Perhaps there was nothing else to do.

All in all, Lana and I agreed there could be no state that could be as boring to drive through as Oklahoma. We were wrong; Kansas was ten times worse.

The sign said, "Scenic Flint Hills The Next 37 Miles."

"Thank God," Lana said. "Finally something to look at."

She was wrong. The sparse trees that had previously dotted the rolling hills disappeared, leaving only rolling hills of green. Frank Zappa must have been driving through when he wrote those immortal words "It can't happen here"--really, it can't. Dorothy deserved to be caught in that cyclone. The Emerald City had to be better than Kansas.

"This is really boring," Lana sighed. "There aren't even any trees to look at. No houses, no cows, no people, nothing!"

"No shit!" I said in sympathy.

"None of that, either," she sighed again.

Despite Buddy's trailer and the countryside, we arrived in Kansas City, Mo., at 2:30 p.m., plowed through the fans waiting in the lobby and the room hassle (the Hotel Continental wanted to pawn a closet off on us as a double room; after two moves, we finally ended up with a room Lana and I could both turn around in at the same time.).

By the evening, we had cleaned up and eaten dinner in preparation for the big beer bash, which turned out to be the Proctors and a couple of other fen rapping with Goh James Gunn over the suds. An hour or two passed and we retired down stairs to wander through the dealers room and gaze at the goodies.

In the lobby we ran into Phil Farmer, who immediately crushed my theory that Gribardsun/Tarzan in *Time's Last Gift* was swept off to Mars to become John Carter in the last scene of the book. However, he did say it was an interesting idea and he would have done it "if I'd thought of it."

ERB top fan Verne Coriell then proceeded to attack me for something friend Steven Utley had written in *Nostalgia News*. I explained I had nothing to do with that Dallas publication and had no control over what Steve wrote. It didn't help. (When Steve arrived the next evening, he and Verne got along fine; nothing was said about the article--I caught all the shit).

Lana and I gave up the ghost about 10 p.m. and left the fannish gathering with the voice of Robby the Robot echoing from the movie room.

Big MAC got its official kickoff at 8 a.m. Friday, June 16, with a lineup of sf documentary films and all-night Ray Harryhausen films.

However, most of our morning was devoted to passing out copies of our own fanzine and rapping with fen. Especially enjoyed the time spent talking with neoconfen; they still retain that sense of wonder con-hardened fans lose.

Early afternoon was spent conversing with Ed Romero and Dave Taylor on the shape of fanzines today and fan art. Ed also mentioned he was working as the art director for *Eternity SF*, the new pro/fanzine sf publication.

Evening brought the usual costume party with a Richard Corben painting as first prize. A local fan dressed as that famous Transylvanian count won out over Alex the Drug, Sheena, and various other sf, movie, and comic book characters.

Other activities that evening were lost to us as we journeyed atop the hotel for a drinking session in the Playboy Club.

Saturday brought the Verne Coriell art show--Frazetta, Krenkel, St. John, Hogarth--originals of all the great ERB artists, complete with a history of each from the mouth of its owner. And the usual con banquet with James Gunn read-

ing the last chapter of his new book, and Phil Farmer reading "After King Kong Fell," a humorous short story he wrote especially for the occasion.

Midnight and the con goers turned to drunks with everyone gathering in Steve and Lana Utley's room for free beer and talk until 4 a.m.

The next morning was spent recovering from the night before in time for check-out, 2 p.m., and loading the car. Just as we planned to cast off for home, Richard Corben and Herb Arnold drifted by and we stopped to chat for about 30 minutes while Buddy loaded up the trailer.

As with all cons the time to leave came too early and we said the goodbyes and hit the road home.

All in all, I had no complaints about MAC I. The con committee provided all they promised and then some. Of course there were minor problems, but not the size problems one usually expects with a first con. If anything, the con committee provided too much to try and take in in too short a time--such as four art shows--Corben, Verne Coriell, Russ Myers, and an amateur showing. However, all were presented in an easy viewing format and the work load was placed on the con committee.

The only complaint I heard registered against a fine film program was that no serial was included. I can't take the complaint that seriously, as I can't take people who sit through 8 hours of a serial at a con seriously.

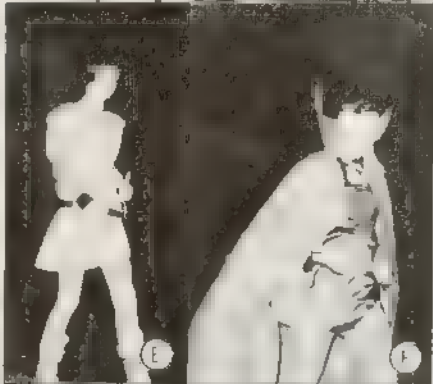
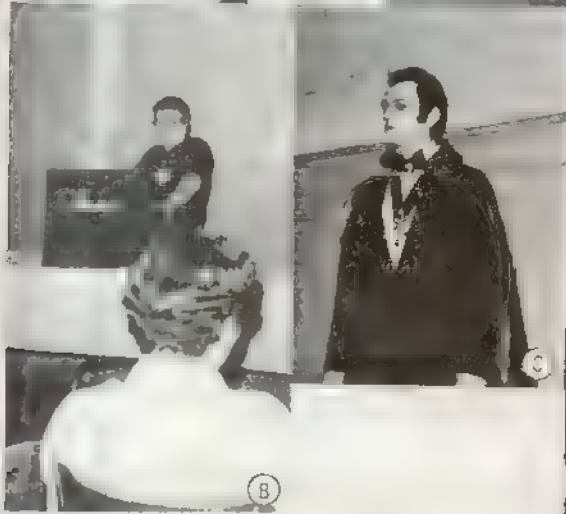
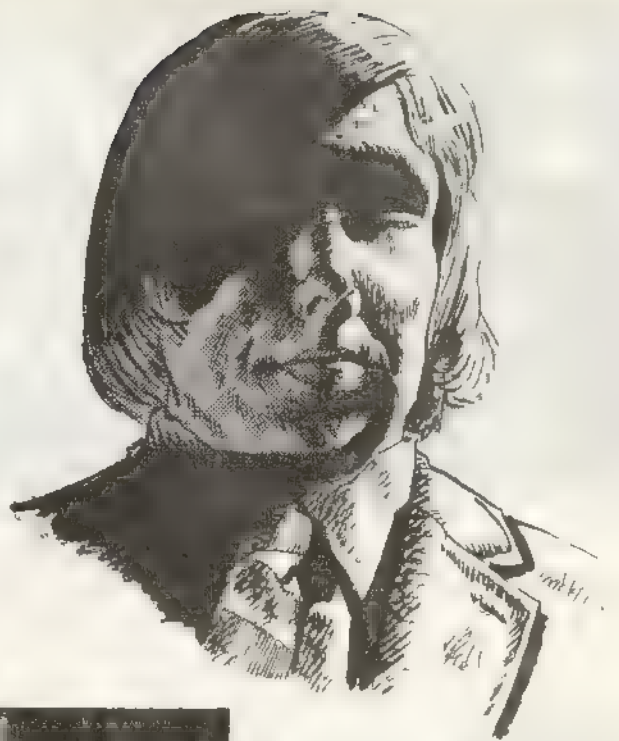
To me the con was impressive, and I look forward to KC's next attempt. Cons grow with age, and this one had about 300 members the first time around. And there will be a next one; you can tell by the gleam in the committee's eyes.

PHOTOS

- A) Ed Romero, Dave Taylor, and Stu Smith admire their newly-acquired EC's during lunch Saturday.
- B) Verne Coriell speaks.
- C) Count Dracula.
- D) George Proctor and Dave relax in the dealers' room.
- E) and F) Other great costumes.
- G) Dave views Rowlf originals in the spectacular Richard Corben art show.
- H) More of the Corben show.
- I) James Gunn lounges in the lounge with an aerial photograph of Kansas City in the background.

Drawings of convention organizer Ken Keller by Herb Arnold.

Photos by Ed Romero.

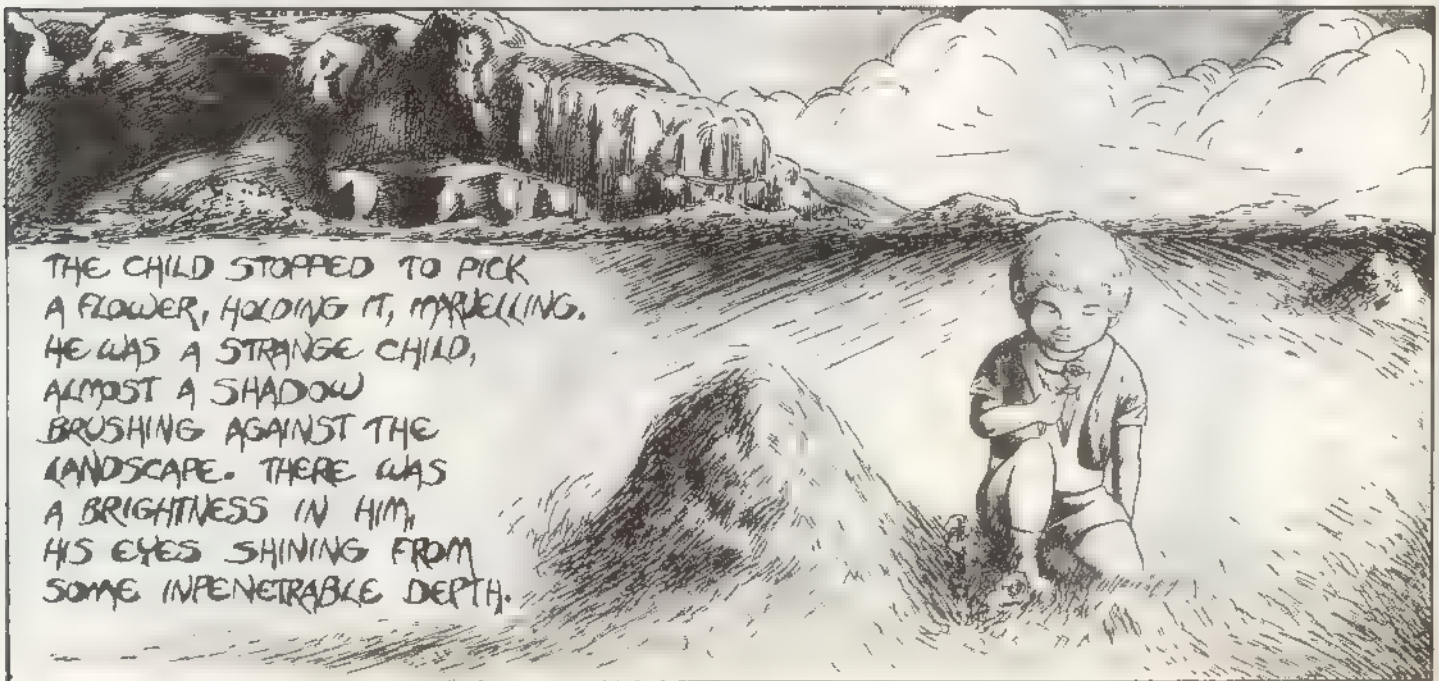


ELUK

WRITTEN BY DICK ADDISON • ILLUSTRATED BY DAVE TAYLOR



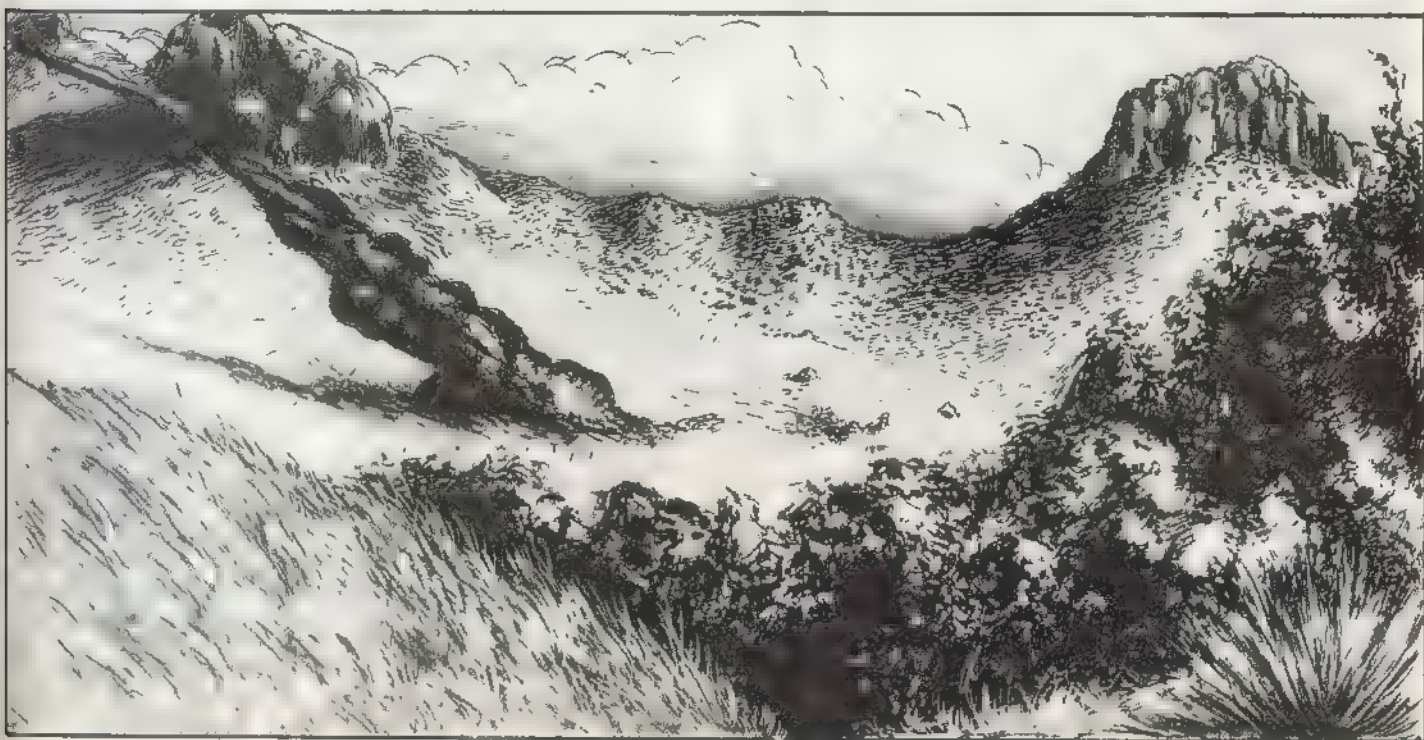
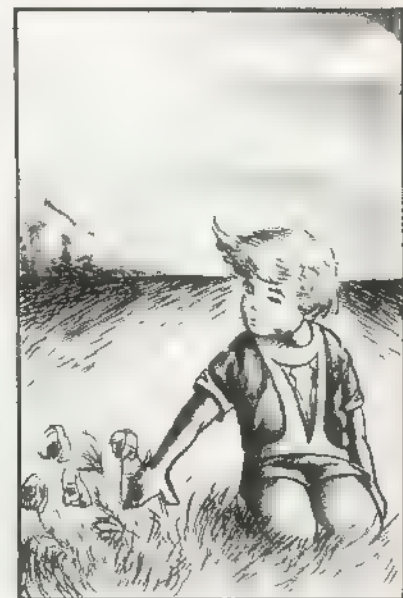
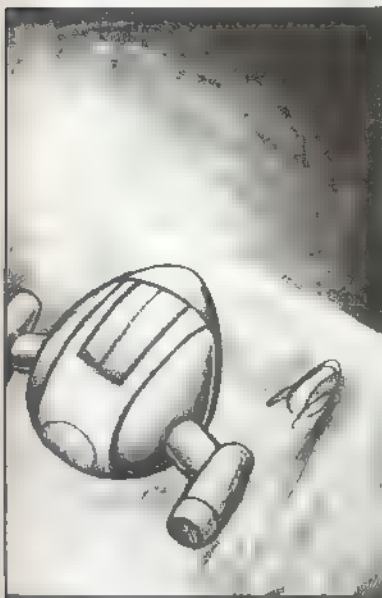
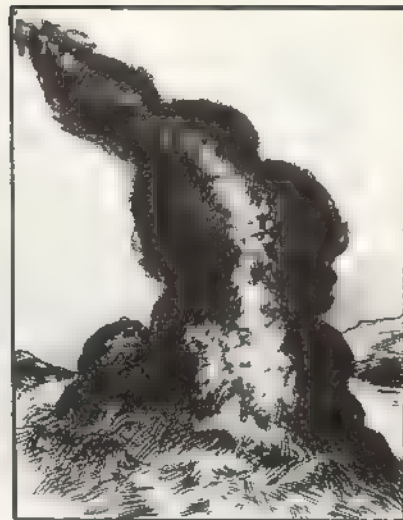
THERE WAS EARLY SUN
IN THE MEADOW, BUT THE
DEW WAS STILL THERE,
LYING LAZY ON THE
FIELD, FLOWERS, AND GRASS.



THE CHILD STOPPED TO PICK
A FLOWER, HOLDING IT, MARVELLING.
HE WAS A STRANGE CHILD,
ALMOST A SHADOW
BRUSHING AGAINST THE
LANDSCAPE. THERE WAS
A BRIGHTNESS IN HIM,
HIS EYES SHINING FROM
SOME IMPENETRABLE DEPTH.



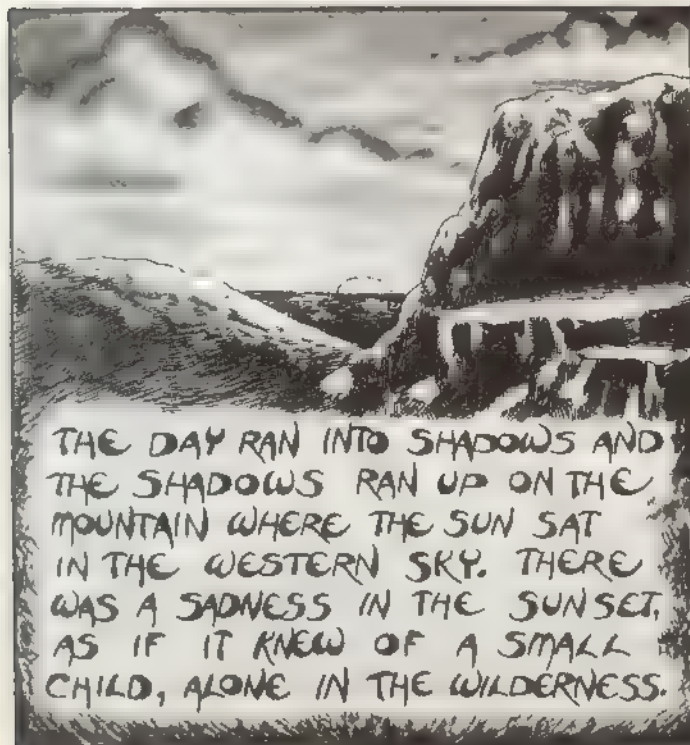
HIS NAME WAS ELYTH. BUT NO ONE WOULD EVER KNOW THAT OR KNOW WHAT HERITAGE HE HAD, FOR ACROSS THE MEADOW WAS THE SMOLDERING REMAINS OF THE VESSEL THAT HAD CARRIED HIS MOTHER, FATHER, AND HIMSELF ACROSS THE SEA OF SPACE. A FAULTY MECHANISM, INCAPACITATING THE SHIP, AND ELYTH EJECTED IN THE SMALL LIFE SHIP AND THE ENSUEING CRASH AND THE EXPLOSION AND THE LITTLE SHIP LANDING CLOSE TO THE GRAVE OF ITS MOTHER SHIP, AND A SMALL CHILD CRYING AT THE DEATH OF HIS FIST, HIS PARENTS, HIS WORLD. HIS NAME WAS ELYTH. HE HAD COME ACROSS SPACE WITH PARENTS WHO WERE EXILES FROM THEIR WORLD. EXILES BECAUSE OF AN EXTRAORDINARY CRIME ON THEIR WORLD. THEY HAD GIVEN BIRTH TO A RETARDED CHILD, AND REFUSED TO ALLOW ITS IMMEDIATE DESTRUCTION. HIS NAME WAS ELYTH AND HE WAS ORPHANED IN A WORLD NOT HIS OWN.



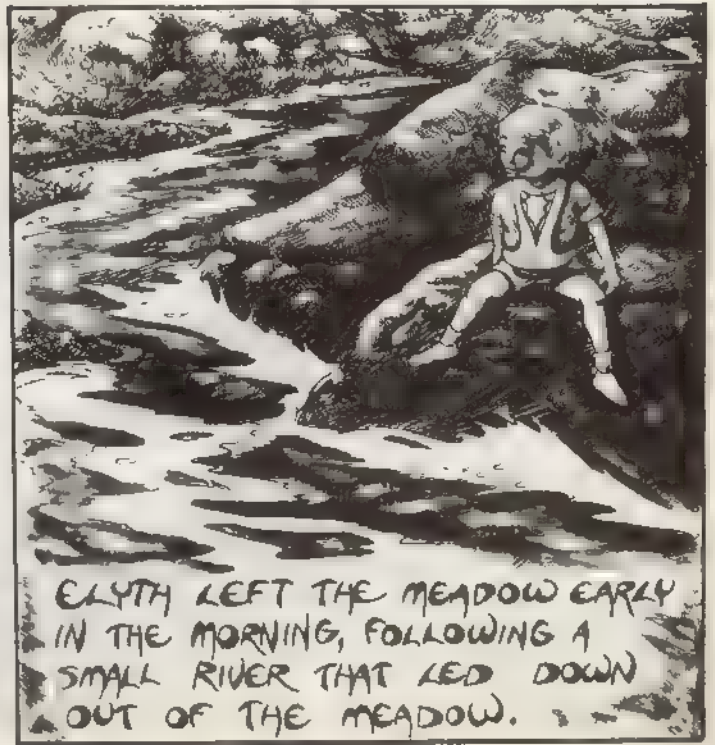
ELYTH LOVED THE WAY
THE BUTTERFLIES DANCED
ABOVE HIS HEAD AND HOW
THE DEW AND THE
GRASS SPARKLED.
ELYTH LOOKED AT
THE SKY. HE WAS
MYSTIFIED BY THE CLOUDS.
HE REACHED AND TRIED TO GRAB
ONE, AND COULD NOT UNDERSTAND
WHY THEY WERE OUT OF REACH.



ELYTH SANG, AND
THE SOUND WAS SO
STRANGE AND
WONDEROUS TO A
WORLD WHICH HAD
NEVER HEARD SUCH
SOUNDS THAT THE
ANIMALS CAME FROM
THE FOREST TO LISTEN.
SQUIRRELS, RABBITS,
DEER, BEARS, AND BIRDS
ALL CAME TO HEAR A
SMALL CHILD SING.



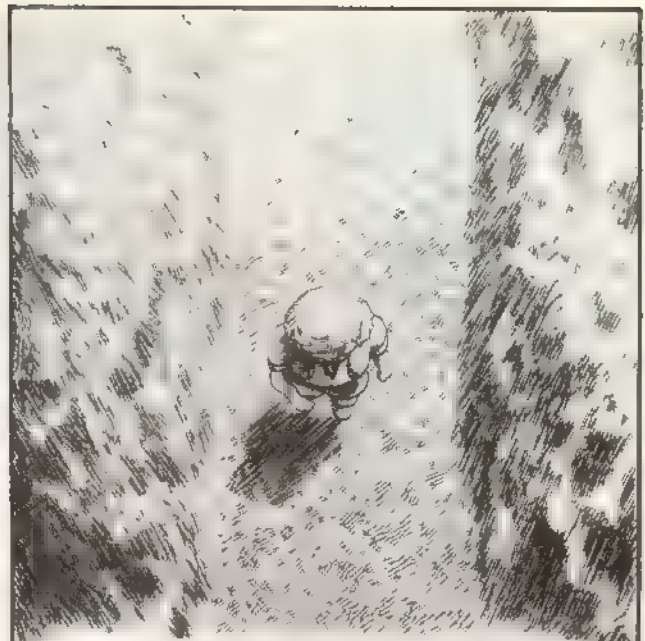
THE DAY RAN INTO SHADOWS AND
THE SHADOWS RAN UP ON THE
MOUNTAIN WHERE THE SUN SAT
IN THE WESTERN SKY. THERE
WAS A SADNESS IN THE SUNSET,
AS IF IT KNEW OF A SMALL
CHILD, ALONE IN THE WILDERNESS.



ELYTH LEFT THE MEADOW EARLY
IN THE MORNING, FOLLOWING A
SMALL RIVER THAT LED DOWN
OUT OF THE MEADOW.



THE FOREST WAS A MAGIC WORLD TO THE CHILD. THERE WAS ALWAYS MOVEMENT; BRANCHES AND GRASS MOVING IN THE WIND. THE SWIFT FURTIVE SCURRYING OF SMALL ANIMALS.



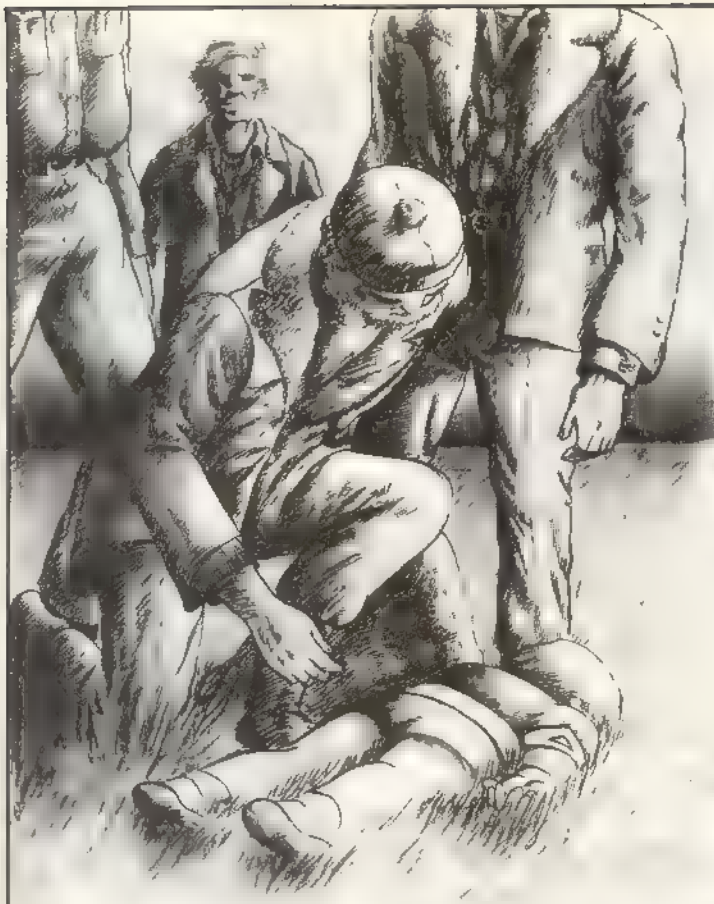
AND YET, NONE OF THE ANIMALS DISTURBED THE BOY. PERHAPS IT WAS THE MEMORY OF HIS SINGING, OR THEY REMEMBERED THE VULNERABILITY OF THEIR OWN YOUNG.



ELYTH DREAMED OF HOME. HE DREAMED OF A WORLD OF GLASS AND CONCRETE; WHERE THERE WAS NO WIND BLOWING. WHERE THERE WAS NO GRASS, TREES, OR BUTTERFLIES.

ELYTH DID NOT WANT THAT OLD WORLD, FOR HE HAD FOUND BEAUTY AND WONDER AND HIS SAD LITTLE MIND WAS AT LAST AT PEACE. AND SO HE SLEPT AND DREAMED NO MORE, FOR FROM THIS SLEEP THERE WOULD BE NO AWAKENING. AND A LITTLE ALIEN WHO WANDERED THE FOREST OF A NEW WORLD DIED IN THE FOREST FROM HUNGER AND EXPOSURE TO AN ENVIRONMENT ALIEN TO HIM; AN ENVIRONMENT WHOSE AIR, EVEN THE WILDERNESS, WAS SO FULL OF POLLUTANTS THAT IT REACHED OUT AND QUIETLY SNATCHED LIFE FROM AN UNSUSPECTING LITTLE BOY.



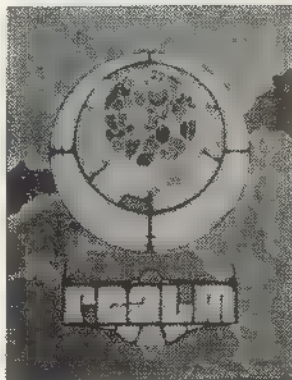


SOME TRAPPERS, WHO WERE WANDERING IN THE FOREST, FOUND HIM LATER. THEY TOOK HIM BACK TO THEIR VILLAGE AND BURIED HIM IN A GRAVE ON A HILLSIDE THAT LOOKED OUT OVER THE VALLEY BEYOND THE WESTERN MOUNTAINS. THEY WONDERED ABOUT HIM, THE STRANGE, SMALL CHILD WITH THE GRAY HAIR AND PECULIAR CLOTHING. THEY TALKED ABOUT HIM, MYSING OVER WHERE HE CAME FROM, AND WHO HE WAS. AND THEY TALKED ABOUT THE FOREST; HOW CRUEL IT WAS TO KILL A SMALL CHILD.



IT IS A LARGE UNIVERSE WE LIVE IN, AND EACH BEING HAS HIS SPECIAL PLACE. SOME FIND IT VERY QUICKLY. SOME ARE BORN INTO IT. AND THERE IS AT LEAST ONE WHO TRAVELED ACROSS THE UNIVERSE TO FIND IT. THE FOREST CAN BE A CRUEL PLACE; DEATH IS SOMETIMES SWIFT AND VIOLENT. BUT TO ELYTH THE FOREST SPREAD A SUMPTUOUS TABLE, AND HE FEASTED AT IT WITH HIS EYES AND WITH HIS HEART. THE FOREST DID NOT KILL ELYTH. IT GAVE HIM LIFE.

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FAN FICTION

An Opinion by JEFFREY MAY

"...Few pieces of fanzine sf receive adequate or meaningful criticism, making their publication of no real value to the authors."

Ted White wrote that about a year and a half ago, in the middle of a column on something else.* To a fair degree, Ted is right, however you define value. One can say value is increased skill in writing fiction; if you don't get criticism you don't know what you're doing wrong. Or right. One can say value is providing entertainment. I write stories and send them to fanzines because I enjoy writing and I hope somebody Out There will read what I've written and be entertained; I equate criticism with notice and notice with value, and if one of my stories doesn't get criticized I'm apt to consider it a failure, because apparently I haven't entertained anybody. Finally, value can mean egoboo. Favorable criticism is great; even unfavorable criticism isn't so bad: At least somebody cared enough to write about your story, and there's always next time.

I do not know if Ted White was thinking of pro-type criticism (like in critics' columns) or of fan-type criticism. Obviously a story in a fanzine doesn't have much of a chance of being criticized by "William Atheling" or Damon Knight. Furthermore, as matters now stand, it's at least an even bet that a fan fiction story won't get criticized by fans either.

A lot of fans don't read fan fiction. Fan fiction has a widespread reputation for being uniformly bad, and many fans don't want to bother with it. Well, yes, fan fiction often is bad. All or nearly all of it is written by amateurs (Ted White also said "very few pro writers write much fiction for fanzines. They prefer to write anectodes, essays, etc."). These amateur writers usually have little

*in Focal Point, v2, #25, p. 4.

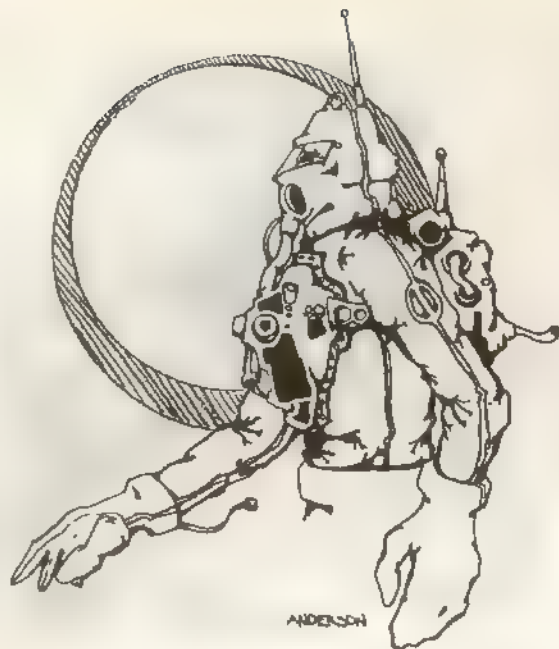
knowledge of how to write fiction. Their stories are poorly plotted and characterized, badly written, and deficient in background and setting. Many fan fiction stories are only imitations of prozine stories, using or ~~misusing~~ reusing an idea already used elsewhere. So, much fan fiction is bad, and unread.

In spite of this I am now going to urge that fans try and read any fiction they see in a fanzine. Writing as one who has had it happen, it can be--is--tremendously disheartening to write a story, get it printed in a fanzine (Every fan writer is always convinced Deep Down, or sometimes not so, that this one is a great story and will be greeted with wild enthusiasm.), and have it ignored, especially with the line "I never read fan fiction because..." This is even worse than having your story tromped on, loudly, by everybody and his aunt.

For Chu's sake, if you come on a story in a fanzine, read the story and comment on it. Whoever wrote it has presumably put some work into it, and he deserves better than to be ignored. If it's a bad story say so; say why. If it's so bad you just can't stand to finish it, don't. I wouldn't blame you. I've seen some that bad myself. Either way, though, try and write and say what you thought was wrong with the story and offer a helpful suggestion if you can. This can be really helpful, and don't think that because you're not a BNF or a pro-type critic your comments have no value. Again from experience, I know they do. Oh, by the way, when you write about a story don't be nasty. Writing biting sarcasm can make you feel really clever, but it can also make the poor devil you're aiming at wish he were dead. Finally, if you do come on something good (it does happen), write and say so, most especially if you never heard of the author before. This is even more important than writing comments on a bad story. Don't fail to write because the story was good. Until you've had it happen to you, you don't know how much it helps to see somebody say, "I liked his (your) story."

Who knows? You just might be encouraging another Ray Bradbury.





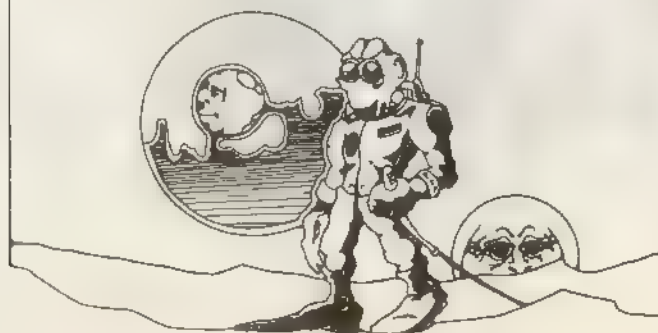
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A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING

Jan Strnad

I don't know why, but I want to write about Pop, the old man who used to care for the hydroponic tanks. I suppose that of all the dead wood aboard ship, he was the least useful, and I'm afraid that his death came as a relief to many of the people in charge. But still, there was something about the old man that hit a chord inside me, and that chord has never stopped resounding. Maybe as I write it out, I'll come to understand why his death--time-ly though it was--should have such an effect on me. Or maybe you can read what I've written, or I'll read it myself when I'm older, and realize why Pop's death meant more to me than logic would decree.

Pop was a member of the First Generation, and he still wore the baggy brown pants he'd been issued when the ship left Earth, our ancestral home. He said they'd never fit him right, but they were made of WearEver and in spite of all he could do, short of using a torch on them, they'd held up fine for the last forty years. He figured they'd probably be on him when he died--that he'd go before they would--and sure enough, he was right.

It was always a treat for me when I was younger to go down to where they kept the hydroponics. It was the closest thing to a jungle we had aboard ship, and the older kids and young lovers used to use it for a park, a place to go on restdays. The plants were nearly all bloom, and they all overhung the trays and lapped over into the aisles. Most were so large that you had to push aside the leaves to find the glimmering silver trays beneath, and they grew nearly from the floor almost to the ceiling. Some were single colors and some were striped or speckled or a dark shade at the end of the petals and a light shade in the middle or . . . well, just about anything you could think of, Pop had growing down there in those hidden tanks. And he was always there, even on restdays, 'fiddling'. That was his own term, 'fiddling', only he pronounced it as if there weren't any 'g' at the end. If I pressed him for a more specific answer he'd give me some technical term--I still don't know if they were real or if he made them up--that I'd forget by the next day. But 'fiddlin'' I remember.

You wouldn't think that Pop and I would have anything in common, but he was one of the ship's great talkers and I'm one of the better listeners, so our relationship just naturally dovetailed the first time we got together. I don't know if any kid back on Earth ever had an Uncle Remus like the one I had aboard ship, only instead of Br'er Rabbit I heard all about how things used to be back on Earth and aboard ship when everybody still thought we'd find a liveable planet out here. According to Pop, the hydroponic tanks used to be used for growing food. I'll admit I had to check with the computer before I'd believe him, but it's true. They used to grow 100% of the foodstuffs available for the ship's entire population right down there in the tanks. I wondered at the time what the original builders would have thought if they could see Pop as he was then, shuffling around in his baggy WearEvers, 'fiddlin'' with a bunch of overgrown, deluxe-model posies.

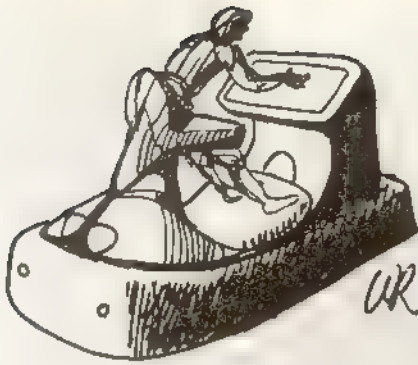
"They had to build these tanks big," he told me, "because once they were finished, they could never be enlarged. Every inch of ship space was needed, but the tanks had to provide food not only for the current generation, but for the next and the next and the next--until a colony planet was found. That was the plan."

He told me about the proud young men who were selected to take charge of the tanks, and how they considered theirs the most sacred duty aboard ship. They didn't think of themselves as glorified farmers, but as life-givers.

"And that's what they were," said Pop, "and I had the honor to be among them." He chuckled to himself. "We were really full of ourselves back then."

I asked him how the flowers got started, if all the tanks were needed.

"Well, they weren't all needed at first--we'd allowed for quite a bit of population growth. Then someone had the idea to grow flowers in the unused tanks. No use in growing more food than we could eat, and as the population grew, the flowers could be replaced with edible plants." Pop shook his head kind of sadly. "Nobody figured that the flowers would outlast the food," he said.



He told me about the invention of the synthesizer and how it had made the hydroponic tanks less and less necessary as the process approached total efficiency. As less food needed to be supplied by the tanks, Pop had begun his experiments with the flowers, and instead of being replaced, they took over. One by one the other hydroponics engineers drifted into other fields, learning what they could, but Pop couldn't get interested in any other area.

The day finally came when the synthesizer carried the entire weight of the food burden. And at the same time, something else was in the air. I didn't know exactly what was going on at first, but I knew something was up. You see, it was commonly known that a general meeting was going to be held in the auditorium, but there'd been no official announcement of it. The news had just travelled along by word of mouth, and I was certain that great pains had been taken that no word reach the hydroponic tanks. I was just a kid and knew it, so I didn't venture out on my own. Though I wanted very badly to tell him, I carefully avoided Pop.

The meeting held no surprises for me, unless I was startled by the sensitivity of one man and the obtuseness of another. It had been moved and seconded that the hydroponic tanks be removed and the space made available for apartments. From where I sat in the back of the room I could see people nodding their heads, apparently in agreement. Then one man stood up with an objection. He addressed the chairman and then made a very short speech. It went something like this:

"With all due respect to those present," he said, "I would like to object to the motion we're considering. I see it as both unfair and, at this time, unnecessary." The people began to murmur and the man looked around for support. He found none, but he continued. "The added room gained by removal of the hydroponic tanks would indeed be a pleasant luxury--just as the plants that grow there now are a luxury. But the cost is high. Those plants are a man's life, and those tanks have a great personal value to him. If we take those from him, what does he have left? Have we the right to deny a man the one way to measure his existence? I move that we wait, that we not be in such a rush." The rest of the audience was buzzing and the speaker was visibly growing more and more nervous. Though I was praying for him to continue, he stammered a single closing comment. "It . . . it doesn't seem like much to ask," he said. He sat down.

Immediately a second man arose. I recognized him as a family man with three children and a pregnant wife.

"And with all due respect to the dissenter, I submit that he knows very little about the way a ship like ours must be run. Let me point out two things: 1) the hydroponic tanks are useless, and 2) though personally I believe that the man you mentioned is a fine person, he is equally as useless as the tanks. He's worked hard for many years--now it's time he took a well-deserved rest."

This last statement was greeted with scattered sounds of agreement. A vote was taken, and it was decided to eliminate the tanks and to retire Pop. From out of the corner of my eye I saw someone in a pair of brown WearEvers slip quietly out the door.

The next day I was up early and ran down to the tanks. I don't know what I expected to find, but I wasn't prepared for the sight of the ship's captain with his arm around Pop's shoulders. They looked more like drinking buddies than antagonists.

"Well Pop," said the captain, "I'm glad you see it that way. *Real* glad. We were afraid you'd, oh, *resent* being retired!"

Pop half-smiled. "Yes, well, maybe I *will* miss fiddlin' around down here every once in awhile, but after all--we can't let one old man stand in the way of a whole slew of young ones, can we? Send your boys down--we'll have some room in here for you in a couple days."

"No hard feelings, Pop? You sure?"

"None at all," said Pop.

"Good! I knew we could count on you. We'll see you later, Pop."

"Yeah," said Pop. "Later."

I couldn't believe it. But still, for the next few days Pop was active as ever, superintending the disassembly of the tanks. He brought out old charts of wiring and plumbing and personally handled the loading of the plants into a great bin that was periodically unloaded into the synthesizer. The flowers went in one end and were lost to sight, but I knew that eventually they'd emerge as steaks and potatoes and eggs, and that I'd eat them many times myself in a hundred different forms.

When it was done, Pop was a very tiny, old man inside the empty room. A few pipe ends still protruded from the walls, and the floor was littered with leaves, and the bin was heaped full of colored blossoms. But nothing remained of the great hydroponic tanks--only the bare floor stretched away in front of Pop as he stood in the doorway. He pointed to the bin of flowers.

"Do me a favor Captain?" he asked.

"After the one you've done the rest of us? Sure!

Just name it." The captain stood smiling, content that he was rendering a great service to all concerned.

"Those flowers," said Pop. "Don't recycle them. Toss them out."

The captain's smile vanished. "But . . . why? We can still make use of them you know. Feed them into the synthesizer and get back edible food . . . no sense in just tossing them out!"

Pop hitched up his pants. "Oh, I'm sure you'll do just fine without this one bin. And I was kind of set on leaving, well, sort of a memorial out there. I know it wouldn't ever be of any use to anybody, but it seems like there should be a place for things that are just nice to have around. What do you say, Captain? Can I have my memorial?"

The captain hesitated, but he eventually relented. The flowers would be tossed out the next day. Pop asked to be left alone, said he had a lot of memories to go over and a lot of plans to make. This wasn't going to be an easy step for him to take and he wanted time to think it over in peace. We left him to his thoughts.

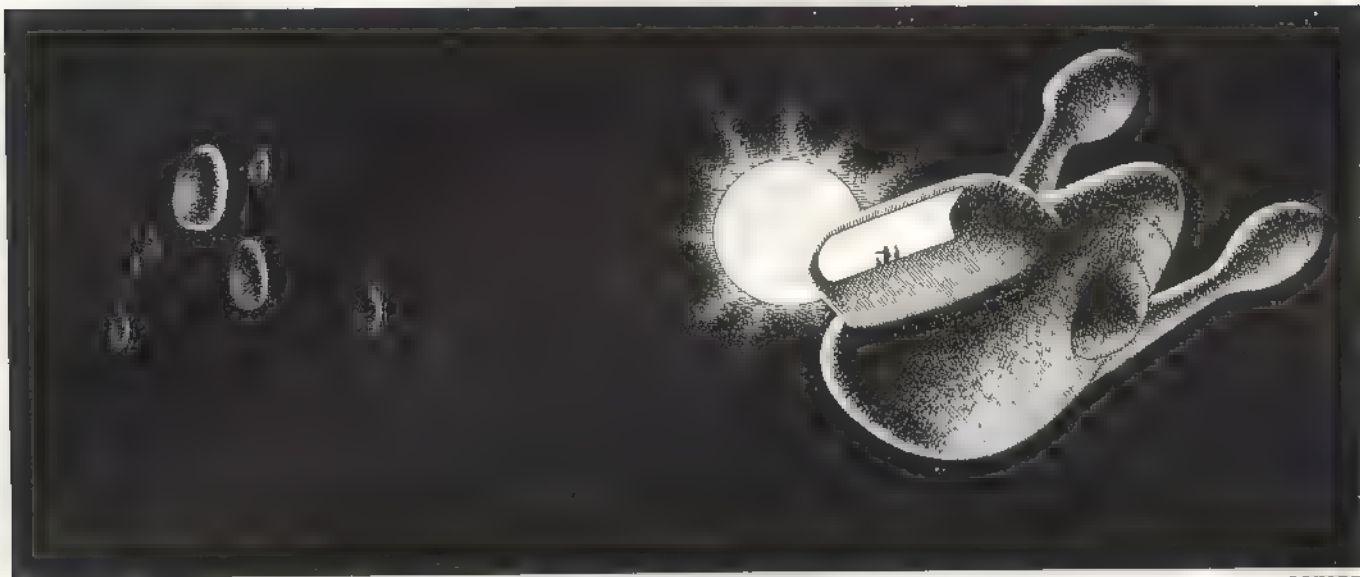
The engineers were there early the next day to begin work on the apartments. They hauled the bin to the disposal hatch and sent someone to find Pop so that he'd be in on the ceremony. When he wouldn't come to the door they decided to proceed without him. They emptied the bin into the hatch and closed the lid. The press of a button sent thousands of blooms and blossoms and leaves shooting into space in a multicolored swirl. I watched them from a window as they spiraled about, catching the gleam from some distant sun that made them glitter like a miniature Milky Way. As the ship pulled away from them I saw more and more of them rotating, revolving in individual orbits, seeming like planets unto themselves in the coldness and deadness of space. And there in the middle of them, frozen into stiffness, floated the body of an old man in baggy brown pants.

"Why that old son-of-a-bitch!" cried the captain.

"He must have hidden in the hatch! Imagine that!"

"Yeah," I said. "Imagine that."

METALWORKS



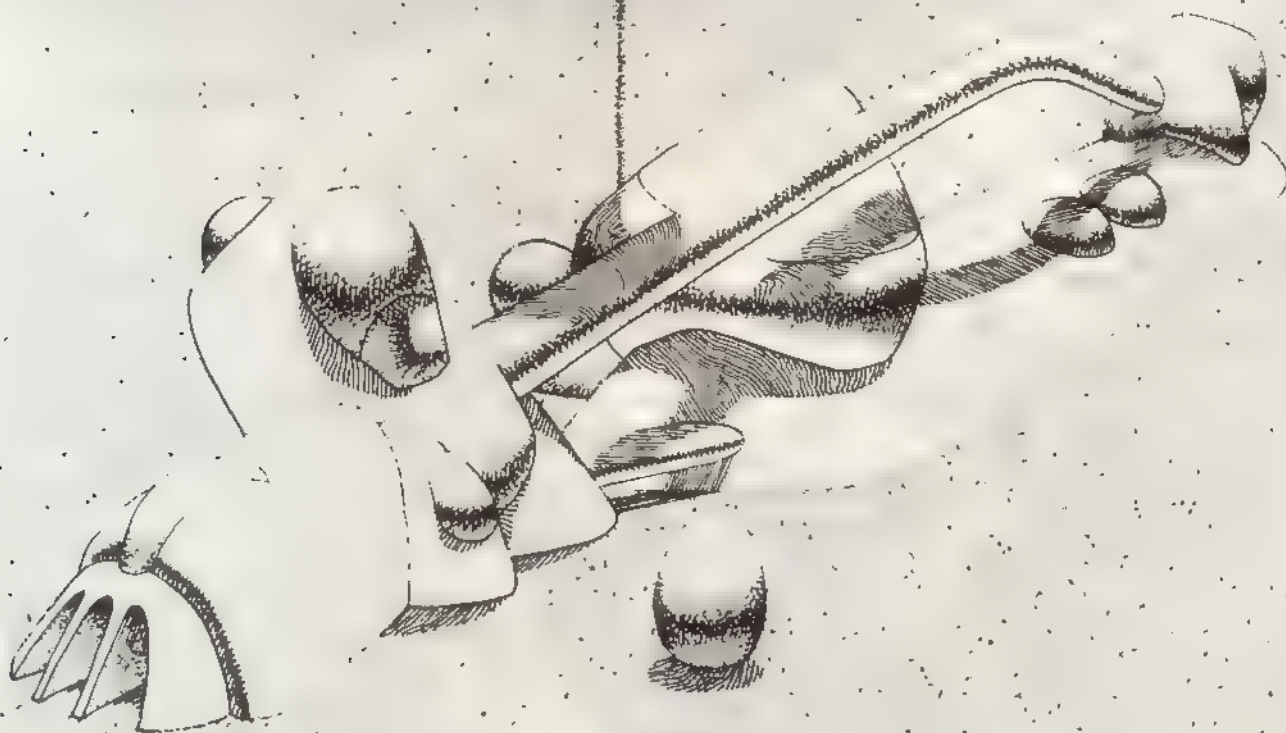
ROMERO

PORTFOLIO
by
ED ROMERO

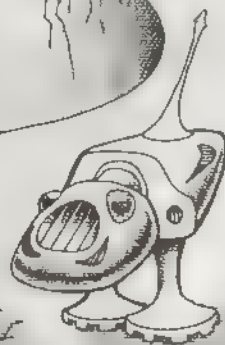
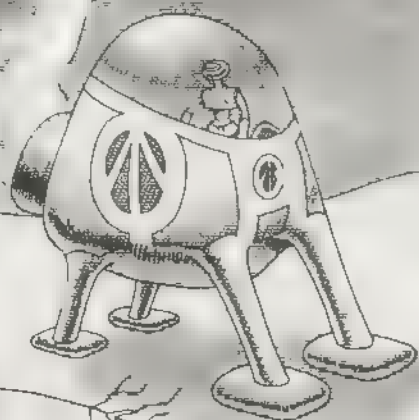
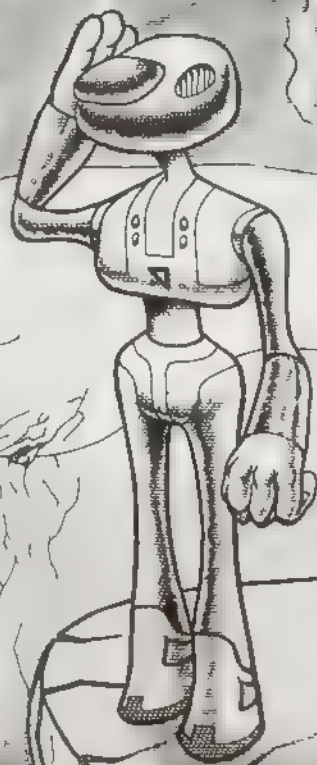
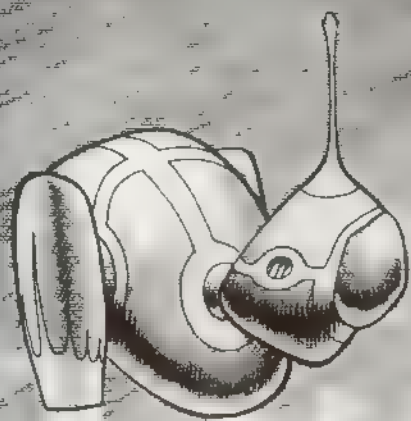


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KOMEDA

JOURNEY TO GORE'S DUNGEON

by Ed Romero



Jan Strnad (left) and Richard Corben (right) look over some of their *Fever Dreams* pages in Richard's basement.

At the New York Comic Art Convention in July, Richard Corben was named the winner of the Goethe Award for favorite fan artist. Oddly enough, Richard had long since stopped doing art for fanzines, and is devoting all his time to underground comix and filmmaking work.

Two weeks earlier, on the evening of June 15, I had visited Richard Corben, along with Jan Strnad and the omnipresent Dave Taylor. After getting lost a few times, we finally succeeded in finding Richard's home in the rolling hills of southern Kansas City, Missouri. Following greetings and introductions (Dave and I hadn't met Richard before), Jan showed everyone John Adkins Richardson's strip for *Fever Dreams* #1, which had come in that day's mail, along with a color back cover by Richardson. Written by Jan, the strip was a 16-page fantasy epic. Originally Richard had intended to draw the strip, and had even done some breakdowns and layouts for it when he decided he wouldn't have time to finish it.

We spent some time looking over the unusually large pages, then Richard led us down into the basement, where his working area is located. There we saw his cover and science fiction strip for the first issue of *Fever Dreams*. The story involved the perception of reality, a recurring theme in Corben's work, and the art was the finest I have seen by him--very small and tight, yet slick and modern. *Fever Dreams* is Richard's latest comix title, written entirely by Jan. The cover consisted of four separate airbrush drawings, each done in black and greys on transparent acetate. When halftoned and printed in black, red, yellow and blue, the overlays would combine to produce a full-color effect. He showed us a color sketch of what the printed cover should look like, and it was really far out. Richard said he used this process for the covers of *Slow Death* #3 and *Up From The Deep* #1, as well as the red and yellow poster which he sold to help get *Fantagor* started.

This prompted me to ask if there was to be another issue of *Fantagor* in large-size, slick paper format, now that it was being released as an underground comix. The answer was a definite no.

"Fandom gave my first issue a very poor reception," Richard said. "I couldn't sell enough of them to even pay for the printing, not to mention expenses like advertising and postage. I had to give up and sell them to dealers at a loss." Fandom's apparent rejection of *Fantagor* soon led Richard to reject fandom as an outlet for his creative efforts.

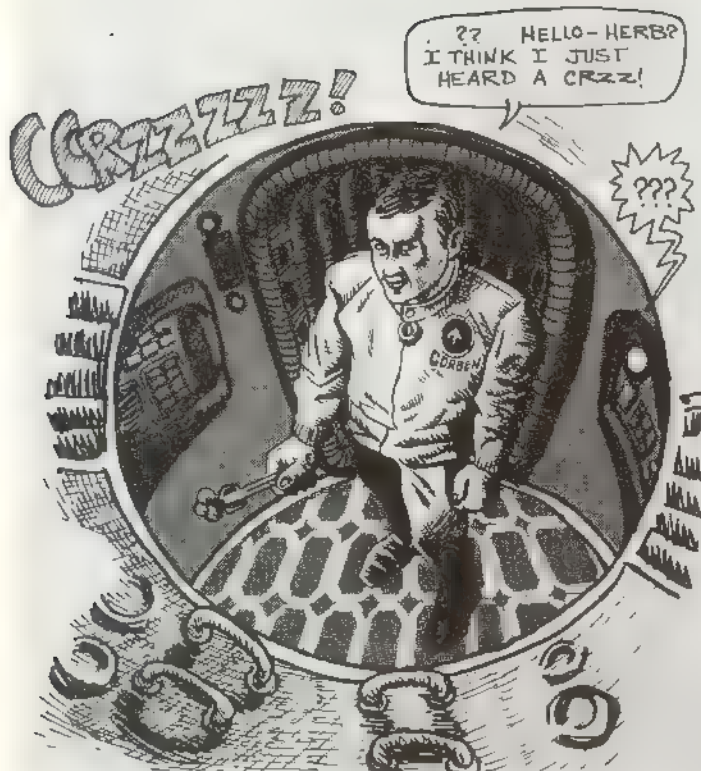
But fandom had let him down more than once. "You may have seen a color poster of Tars Tarkas of Barsoom by me," continued Richard. "Caz published it a couple of years ago. I sent that painting to him to use as a cover on *ERB-dom*, and without my permission it was published instead in poster form. What's bad is that a successful poster is a profitable item. I never saw any of that money. Why should I work for free for people who show no consideration for me?"

I then asked when the second issue of *Fantagor* in comix format would be out, and was surprised to be shown some advance copies which Richard had received only a few days before. I commented on the beautiful color section, and Richard said, "Number three will be full-color from cover to cover, for only seventy-five cents!"

"At this rate, you'll soon be in competition with straight comix," Jan remarked.

"That's the whole idea," said Richard.

I began to walk around the room looking at the unpublished Corben art that was scattered about. His drawing board was covered with layouts, sketches, notes and xeroxes. Near the board was a small white plaster carving of a beautiful Corbenesque woman, which Richard said he was considering having castings made from for sale. Behind the drawing board were several shelves of small clay or plaster figures, modeled in a three-dimensional version



of the familiar Corben style. Some were heads which he made to sketch from (Richard explained that he finds them useful in studying the effects of various lighting on the face), and some were puppets created for use in stop-motion animation films. The animation puppets were painted and clothed, and were very attractive. Several three-dimensional landscapes, also done for use in stop-motion animation, were hidden away in dark corners of the room. Richard has done a great deal of animation, and may be best known for his fantastic fantasy film *NeverWhere*, which combines live acting with animated drawings. It has been a favorite at conventions since 1970, and recently it won a CINE Gold Eagle, and the President of Japan Cultural Society award. Fans of *NeverWhere* and art lovers everywhere can look forward to more Corben films, starting with *Xenogames*, which Richard is now working on.

I asked Richard what else his fans could expect to see from him in the future. "More comix," Richard replied, "especially color comix. *Graphic Story Magazine* will

soon be publishing a full-color strip of mine, and one will soon appear in *Funnyworld*. I have a few more underground comix titles in mind, and will have some work in Jan's new comix version of *Anomaly*.

"Jan and I are pioneering the idea of the writer and the artist of a comixstrip as two separate individuals. For comix, this is a new idea, but we're doing it and it's working well," said Richard. After reading "To Spear a Fair Maiden" in *Fantagor* and the *Fever Dreams* stories, I couldn't agree more.

Everyone was anxious to get down to the Hotel Continental to see what was happening at the Mid-America Con, [See George Proctor's con report elsewhere in this issue.] so we soon ascended from "Gore's dungeon," as Richard's basement has been called. Before leaving the house, I paused to look at the paintings by Richard which adorn his living room walls. All of them were truly inspiring. Richard Corben is certainly an artist's artist--and an unforgettable human being.



Left: One of the paintings in Richard's living room.

Above: Two portraits of Richard from Herb Arnold's sketchbook. If you have *Skull Comix* #4 you might find it interesting to compare the drawing at right with Herb's representation of Pickman in his comix adaptation of "Pickman's Model" in that issue.



EDITOR'S PAGE

A Slopmy-sentimental Thank You

In the fall of 1969, unnoticed by almost everyone, a little ditto fanzine named *Fantasy Realm* was born. Who could have guessed that it would grow up to be a big, successful superzine like *Realm* 5? Not I, said the editor.

I've always wanted to make *Realm* a high-quality fanzine, but never thought I could do it without a lot of help. Fortunately, help came. At least a hundred people had a hand in the creation of *Realm* 5: friends, strangers, fans, pros, teachers, printers, and many others. Thank you, everyone, for helping me turn a daydream into a reality.

Mandatory Tardiness Apology

Oh, is it September already? Eight months late, you say? I'm terribly sorry; how careless of me. I could have had this issue out at the appointed time without a bit of trouble. Of course, it would have been about 90% filler-grade material. Seriously, almost all of the better quality features in this issue were not available before June, and I spent most of the summer working and traveling. I hope no one was terribly upset by the delay, and if so, I apologize. A special "forgive me" must go to Darrel Anderson, Doug Potter, and Gary Brown for making them wait so long to see their work in print.

Do Yourself A Favor

The next issue of *Realm* will be an all-comix issue, bigger and better than *Realm* 5. Order it now for only 75¢ and you will avoid any future price increase. Since very little editing work will be necessary on the comics, and since *Realm*'s financial standing is rapidly improving, the issue should be out on schedule for a change.

Be A Capitalist

You can order ten or more copies of *Realm* 5 or *Realm* 6 for only 50¢ each. This is possible because of savings to me in postage costs, and because I'm willing to take a loss on wholesale orders in order to increase *Realm*'s circulation. One hundred copies of an issue can be had for only \$45. Write for information on wholesale back issues, Truth Portfolios, and posters.

How About A Little Boo

Letters of comment are welcomed and appreciated. Remember, we don't get anything out of this work but egoboo, so how about a little boo for our egos! (Somehow that doesn't sound quite right...) All inquiries requiring a personal reply should be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Yes, We Have No Bananas

Yes, we have no bananas, but if you'd like to contribute something for *Realm* anyway, get in touch. Only the

highest quality work can be used, however, and nothing can be returned or acknowledged unless you enclose sufficient return postage.

I'm Running Out Of Press-Type

So I suppose it's time to bring this column to a close. I hope you like this issue of *Realm*, and find it to be worth whatever you paid for it. Until *Realm* 6, fare thee well!

...Ed Romero



THE GUARDIAN CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22...

They were awakened by the daylight as the Luminary rose. They stirred, and Zymah murmured, "Oh, Vanar, was it all real?" and then she made a choked sound of terror. Vanar came fully awake in an instant and sat up quickly. Unmarred by its night's labors, the Guardian stood serenely just within the door.

END

We are presenting on these pages a group of original drawings in tribute to three great comic characters. **Synesthesia**, **Girl from LSD**, is our first offering, as drawn for REALM by the strip's creator, **Bill Black**.

COMIC ART GALLERY



Working directly from **Gil Kane's** original sketches for two pages of **Blackmark #1**, **Dave Taylor** developed these fine silverpoint drawings.



Finally, this issue's back cover depicts **Steve Ditko's** innovative character, **Doctor Strange**. **Ed Romero** (Who's he?) got a little help from **Dave Taylor** on this one. —————▶

